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HASSAN:

OR,

THE CHILD OF THE PYRAMID.

AN EGYPTIAN TALE.

BY THE HON. C. A. MURRAY, C.B.

AUTHOR OF

'THE PRAIRIE BIRD,' 'TRAVELS IN NORTH AMERICA,'
ETC.



IN TWO VOLUMES.

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H A S S A N ;

OR,

THE CHILD OF THE PYRAMID.

CHAPTER I.

A BEDOUIN ENCAMPMENT—HASSAN IS INTRODUCED, AND
THOUGH ONLY A BOY, IS IN TROUBLE.

MORE than thirty years have elapsed since, on a fine summer evening, the tents of an Arab encampment might have been seen dotting the plain which forms the western boundary of the Egyptian province of Bahyrah, a district bordering on the great Libyan desert, and extending northward as far as the shore of the Mediterranean.

The western portion of this province has been for many years, and probably still is, the camping-ground of the powerful and warlike tribe of the 'Sons of Ali : ' a branch of which tribe, acknowledging as its chief Sheik Sâleh el-Ghazy, occupied the encampment above referred to.*

* The 'Sons of Ali,' or, as they are called, the 'Oulâd-Ali,' have been settled for many years in Egypt, but their legen-

The evening was calm and still, and lovely as childhood's sleep: no sound of rolling wheel, or distant anvil, or busy mill, or of the thousand other accessories of human labour, was there to intrude harshly on the ear. Within the encampment there was indeed to be heard the 'watch-dog's honest bark,' the voices of women and children, mingled with the deeper tones of the evening prayer uttered by many a robed figure worshipping towards the east, but beyond it nought was to be heard save the tinkling of the bells of the home-coming flocks, and the soft western breeze whispering among the branches of the graceful palms its joy at having passed the regions of dreary sand. It seemed as if Nature herself were about to slumber, and were inviting man to share her rest.

In front of his tent sat Sheik Sâleh, on a Turkish carpet, smoking his pipe in apparent forgetfulness that his left arm was bandaged and supported by a sling.

At a little distance from him were his two favourite mares, each with a foal at her side, and farther off, two or three score of goats, tethered

dary history is carried back to the period when they dwelt in Upper Arabia, and they claim affinity with a tribe which still pastures its flocks on the borders of the Nejd.

in line to a kels,* surrendering their milky stock to the expert fingers of two of the inmates of the Sheik's harem ; beyond these, several hundred sheep were taking their last nibble at the short herbs now freshened by the evening dew ; while in the distance might be seen a string of camels, wending their slow and ungainly way homeward from the edge of the desert : the foremost ridden by an urchin not twelve years old, carolling at the utmost stretch of his lungs an ancient Arab ditty, addressed by some despairing lover to the gazelle-eyes of his mistress.

The Sheik sat listlessly, allowing his eyes to wander over these familiar objects, and to rest on the golden clouds beyond, which crowned the distant sand-hills of the Libyan desert. The neglected pipe was thrown across his knee, and he was insensibly yielding to the slumberous influence of the hour, when his repose was suddenly disturbed by the sound of voices in high altercation, and a few minutes afterwards his son Hassan, a lad nearly sixteen years of age, stood before him,

* A kels is a long rope extended in line, and fastened to the ground by pegs ; throughout its whole length, at intervals of eighteen inches, are fixed two short nooses or slip-knots, into which the fore-feet of the goats are inserted at milking-time. In Persia, it is usual on a march to fasten the horses at night in a manner precisely similar.

his countenance bearing the traces of recent and still unsubdued passion, while the blood trickled unheeded down his cheek.

As this youth is destined to be the hero of our tale, it may be well to give a slight sketch of his personal appearance at the time of his first introduction to the reader's notice.

Although scarcely emerged from boyhood, his height, the breadth of his chest, and the muscular development of his limbs, gave the impression of his being two or three years older than he really was; in dress he differed in nowise from the other Arab lads in the encampment, nor did his complexion vary much from theirs—bronzed as it was by constant exposure to weather and sun; his eyes were not like those of the Arab race in general—rather small, piercing, and deep-set—but remarkably large, dark, and expressive, shaded by lashes of unusual length; a high forehead, a nose rather Greek than Roman in its outline, and a mouth expressive of frank mirth or settled determination, according to the mood of the hour, completed the features of a countenance which, though eminently handsome, it was difficult to assign to any particular country or race. Such was the youth who now stood before his father, his breast still heaving with indignation.

‘What has happened, my son?’ said the Sheik; ‘whence this anger, and this blood on your cheek?’

‘Son!’ repeated the youth, in a tone in which passion was mingled with irony.

‘Whence this blood?’ again demanded the Sheik, surprised at an emotion such as he had never before witnessed in the youth.

‘They say it is the blood of a bastard,’ replied Hassan, his dark eye gleaming with renewed indignation.

‘What is that!’ shrieked Khadijah, the wife of the Sheik, suddenly appearing from an inner compartment of the tent, where she had overheard what had passed.

‘Peace, woman,’ said the Sheik, authoritatively; ‘and prepare a plaster for Hassan’s wound.’ Then turning to the latter, he added, in a milder tone: ‘My son, remember the proverb, that Patience is the key to contentment, while anger opens the door to repentance. Calm your spirit, and tell me plainly what has happened. Inshallah, we will find a remedy.’

Hassan, having by this time recovered his composure, related how he had been engaged in taking some horses to the water, when a dispute arose between him and a young man named

Youssuf Ebn-Solyman, in the course of which the latter said to him :

‘How dare you speak thus to me, you who are nothing but an Ebn-Haram?’ To this insult Hassan replied by a blow ; Youssuf retaliated by striking him on the temple with a stone ; upon which, after a violent struggle, Hassan succeeded in inflicting on his opponent a severe beating.

‘And now,’ said the youth, in concluding his narrative, ‘I wish to know why I have been called by this hateful name—a name that disgraces both you and my mother ? I will not endure it, and whoever calls me so, be he boy or man, I will have his blood.’

‘Are you sure,’ inquired the Sheik, ‘that he said *Hharam* and not *Heram* ?’*

* For the information of the English reader it is necessary to mention that the word *Herâm*, with a light aspirate of the initial letter, is the conventional term in Egypt applied to the Pyramid (its plural is *Ehrâm*), whereas *Hharâm*, with a slight guttural pronunciation of the initial letter, signifies ‘shame’ or ‘sin.’ Although these two sounds are scarcely distinguishable from each other in the mouth of an European, they are perfectly distinct in that of an Arab ; and thus the expression ‘*Ebn-Harâm*,’ according as the initial is pronounced, means ‘Child of the Pyramid,’ or ‘Child of Shame.’ In the latter form it is the word commonly used to designate a bastard.

‘I am sure,’ replied Hassan, ‘for he repeated it twice with a tone of contempt.’

‘Then,’ said the Sheik, ‘you were right to beat him ; but the name, among mischievous people, will occasion you many quarrels : henceforth in the tribe you shall be called Hassan el-Gizèwi.’

‘Why should I be called El-Gizewi?’ said the youth. ‘What have we, Oulâd-Ali, to do with Gizeh and the Pyramids?’*

After some hesitation, the Sheik replied—‘We were passing through that district when you were born ; hence the name properly belongs to you.’

‘Father,’ said Hassan, fixing his dark eyes earnestly on the Sheik’s countenance, ‘there is some secret here ; I read it in your face. If I am a child of shame, let me know the worst, that I may go far away from the tents of the Oulâd-Ali.’

Sheik Sâleh was much more a man of deeds than of words, and this direct appeal from Hassan sorely perplexed him ; thinking it better at all events to gain time for reflection, he replied—

‘To-morrow you shall be told why you were called Ebn el-Heram, and why there was no shame connected with the name. Now go into

* Hassan El-Gizèwi, or Hassan of *Ghizeh*, the district in which, about eight or nine miles from Cairo, stand the Great and several of the smaller Pyramids.

the tent ; tell Khadijah to dress your wound, and then to prepare my evening meal.'

Accustomed from his childhood to pay implicit obedience to parental orders, Hassan retired into the inner tent, while the Sheik resumed his pipe and his meditations. The result of them may be seen from a conversation which he held with Khadijah that same evening when the other members of the family had retired to rest.

'What is to be done in this matter?' said the Sheik to his spouse ; 'you heard the questions which Hassan asked?'

'I did,' she replied. 'By your blessed head it is better now to tell him all the truth ; the down is on his lip ; he is no longer a child ; his curiosity is excited ; several of our tribe know the secret, and, although far away now, they may return, and he would learn it from them.'

'That is true,' replied the Sheik ; 'yet if he knows that he is not our child, he will not remain here ; he will desire to find his real parents ; and I would rather part with my two best mares than with him. I love him as if he were my son.'

Now Khadijah, who had borne to the Sheik three children still living—two girls, of whom the eldest was fourteen, and a little boy aged eight

years—did not love Hassan quite as she loved her own children ; although she had nurtured and brought him up, a mother's instincts prevailed, and she was somewhat jealous of the hold which he had taken on the affections of the Sheik. Under these impressions she replied—

‘The truth cannot be long kept concealed from him ; is it not better to tell him at once ? every man must follow his destiny ; that which is written must come to pass.’

‘I like not his going away,’ said Sheik Sâleh, moodily ; ‘for that boy, if he remain with us, will be an honour to our tent and to our tribe. There is not one of his age who can run, or ride, or use a lance like him. In the last expedition that I made against the tribe of Sammalous did he not prevail on me to take him, by assuring me that he only wished to follow at a distance with a spare horse in case of need ; and did he not bring me that spare horse in the thickest of the fight, and strike down a Sammalous who was going to pierce me with his lance after I had received this wound ?’ Here the Sheik cast his eyes down upon his wounded arm, muttering—‘A brave boy ! a brave boy !’

Khadijah felt the truth of his observation, but, unaccustomed to have the worst of an argument,

or at least to own it, she returned to the charge, saying—

‘Truly you men are wise in all that concerns horses, hunting, and fighting; but in other matters, Allah knows that you have little sense. Do you not see that the youth already doubts that he is our son, and you have never adopted him according to the religious law.* He will shortly learn the truth; others will know it, too: then what will the men and women of the tribe say of us, who allow this stranger in blood to dwell familiarly in our tent with Temimah our daughter, whose days of marriage should be near at hand?’

Khadijah was not wrong in believing that this last argument would touch her husband in a tender point, for he was very proud of Temimah, and looked forward to see her married into one of the highest families in the tribe; he therefore gave up the contest with a sigh of dissatisfaction, and consented that Khadijah should on the follow-

* The Mohammedan law acknowledges in full the custom of parental adoption, and a child so adopted has legal right of inheritance, in common with heirs of the body; but certain religious forms are prescribed for this adoption which it seems that Sheik Sâleh had not observed in respect to Hassan, probably from a belief that some day he would be claimed by his real parents.

ing morning inform Hassan of all that she knew of his early history.

Now that she had gained the victory, Khadijah, like many other conquerors, was at a loss how to improve it. She was essentially a good-hearted woman, and although while Hassan's interests came into collision with those of her own offspring, Nature pleaded irresistibly for the latter, still, now that the collision seemed about to be removed, she called to mind how good and affectionate Hassan had always been to herself, how he had protected and taken care of her little son, and tears came into her eyes when she reflected that the disclosure of the morrow must not only give him pain, but probably cause a final separation.

The hours of night passed slowly away, but anxiety and excitement kept unclosed the eyes of Hassan and Khadijah : the one hoping, yet fearing to penetrate the mystery of his birth, the other unwilling to banish from her sight one whom now that she was about to lose him, she felt that she loved more than she had been aware of.

The hours of night! Brief words, that should indicate a short space of universal tranquillity and repose, yet, oh! what a countless multitude of human joys, sorrows, and vicissitudes do they embrace! The hours of night!—In the forest and

in the wilderness they look upon the prowling wolf and the tiger stealing towards their unconscious prey, upon the lurking assassin, the noiseless ambush, and the stealthy band about to fall with war-shout and lance on the slumbering caravan. In the densely-peopled city, they look not on the sweet and refreshing rest which the God of nature meant them to distil from their balmy wings, but on gorgeous saloons, blazing with light, in which love and hate, jealousy and envy, joy and sorrow, all clothed with silk, with jewels, and with smiles, are busy as the minstrel's hand and the dancer's feet; on halls where the circling cup, and laugh, and song, proclaim a more boisterous revelry; on the riotous chambers of drunkenness and debauchery; on those yet lower dens of vice, into which a ray of God's blessed sun is never permitted to shine, where the frenzied gambler stakes on the cast of a die the last hopes of his neglected family; on the squalid haunts of misery, to whose wretched occupants the gnawing pangs of hunger deny even the temporary forgetfulness of sleep. Yes, on these and a thousand varieties of scenes like these, do the hours of night look down from their starry height, wondering and weeping to see how their peaceful influence is marred by the folly and depravity of man.

The hours of night are the hours of dreams and fantasies, and they have not unnaturally beguiled me into a digression, for which the only apology that I shall offer is a simile, perhaps worse than the offence, but it will explain my views to the reader, and show him what he or she may expect in the following pages.

History is like a journey to some special destination, undertaken from motives of duty, and no digression is permissible that does not directly lead to the attainment of the ultimate object, Truth ; whereas a Tale of Fiction is like a pleasure trip in a yacht, in which Captain Author invites his friend Mr. or Mrs. Reader to accompany him, and the monotony of the voyage is relieved by visiting the bays, islands, and picturesque objects which lie within reasonable distance of their course. In this comparison the advantage is all on the side of the tale, for the invited guest once embarked, cannot always, even if bored to death, separate from the owner of the yacht, whereas the reader, when bored by the author, has always two excellent remedies at hand—to skip the digression, or close the book.

CHAPTER II.

HASSAN LEARNS HOW HE CAME BY THE NAME OF 'CHILD OF THE PYRAMID'—HE LEAVES THE CAMP AND GOES TO ALEXANDRIA.

A GREEABLY to Arab custom, Khadijah rose with the early dawn, and having seen that her daughters and her two slave-girls were busied in their respective morning tasks, she called Hassan into the inner tent, in order to give him the information which he had been awaiting through a sleepless night of anxiety; but as the good woman accompanied her tale with many irrelevant exclamations and digressions, it will be more brief and intelligible if we relate its substance in a narrative form.

A little more than fifteen years previous to the opening of our tale, Khadijah, in company with her husband and a score of his followers, had been paying a visit to a friendly tribe camped in the neighbourhood of Sakkarah.*

* Sakkarah is a district lying twelve or fourteen miles to the south-west of Cairo, and is familiar to all Egyptian travellers and untravelled readers as being the site of several Pyramids, near which excavations have been made with highly interesting results.

On returning northward, through the district of Ghizeh, near the Great Pyramid, she was seized with premature labour in consequence of a fall, and was delivered of a child, which only survived a few days. It was buried in the desert, and, as her health had suffered from the two-fold shock, Sheik Sâleh remained a short time in the neighbourhood, to allow her to recruit her strength.

One evening she had strolled from his tent, and, after wailing and weeping a while over the grave of her little one, she went on and sat down on the projecting base-stone of the Great Pyramid. While gazing on the domes and minarets of the 'Mother of the world,'* then gilded by the rays of a setting sun, her ears caught the sound of a horseman approaching at full speed. So rapid was his progress, that, ere she had time to move, he was at her side.

'Bedouin woman,' he said to her, in a hurried and agitated voice, 'are you a mother?'

'I am,' she replied. 'At least, I have been.'

'El-hamdu-lillah, praise be to God,' said the horseman. Dismounting, he drew from under his cloak a parcel wrapt in a shawl, and placed it

* One of the Arabic names of Cairo is 'Omm-ed-doonia,' 'Mother of the world.'

gently beside her at the base of the Pyramid, then vaulting on his horse, dashed his spurs into its flank, and disappeared with the same reckless speed that had marked his approach.

The astonished Khadijah was still following with her eye his retreating figure, when a faint cry caught her ear. What mother's ear was ever deaf to that sound? Hastily withdrawing the shawl, she found beneath it an infant, whose features and dress indicated a parentage of the higher class. Around his neck was an amulet of a strange and antique fashion; round his body was a sash, in the folds of which was secured a purse containing forty Venetian sequins, and attached to the purse was a strip of parchment, on which was written the following sentence from the traditions of the Prophet, 'Blessed be he that gives protection to the foundling.'

Hassan, who had been listening with 'bated breath' to Khadijah's narrative, and who had discovered as easily as the reader that he was himself the 'Child of the Pyramid,' suddenly asked her—

'Was that horseman my father?'

'I know not,' she replied, 'for we have never seen or heard of him since that day. Nevertheless, I think it must have been your father, for I could see that, just before springing on his horse

to depart, he turned and gave such a look on the shawl-wrapper that—'

'What kind of look was it?' said Hassan, hastily, interrupting her.

'I cannot describe it,' said Khadija. 'It might be love, it might be sorrow; but my heart told me it was the look of a father.'

'What was the horseman like?' said Hassan.

'I had not time nor opportunity to examine closely either his features or his dress,' replied Khadijah; 'and were he to come into the tent now I should not know him again. But he seemed a tall, large man, and I guessed him to be a Mameluke.'

It is not to be wondered at if Khadijah's narrative had deeply interested and agitated Hassan's feelings. As he left the tent, and emerged into the open air, he mentally exclaimed—'Sheik Sâleh is not my father; but Allah be praised that I am not the son of a Fellah.* Unknown father, if Thou art still on earth, I will find and embrace thee.'

During the whole of that day he continued silent and thoughtful. At meals he cared not to touch food, and towards evening he strolled beyond the borders of the encampment, lost in conjecture

* The Fellahs, or agricultural population in Egypt, are much despised by the Bedouin Arabs.

on his mysterious birth and parentage. Ambition began to stir in his breast, and visions of horse-tails* and diamond-hilted swords floated before his eyes. While engaged in these day-dreams of fancy, he had unconsciously seated himself on a small mound near the spot where Temimah, the eldest daughter of the Sheik, was tending some goats, which she was about to drive back to the tents. With the noiseless step and playful movement of a kitten, she stole gently behind him, and covering his eyes with her hands, said—‘Whose prisoner are you now?’

‘Temimah’s,’ replied the youth; ‘what does she desire of her captive?’

‘Tell me,’ said the girl, seating herself beside him, ‘why is my brother sad and silent to-day; has anything happened?’

‘Much has happened,’ replied Hassan, with a grave and abstracted air.

‘Come now, my brother,’ said Temimah, ‘this is unkind; what is this secret that you keep from your sister?’

‘One which will cause me to leave you,’ answered Hassan, still in the same musing tone.

* Alluding to the horsetails which formerly designated the rank of a Pasha. When three in number they indicated the rank of a Vizier. The practice is now falling or fallen into disuse.

‘Leave us!’ she exclaimed. ‘Where to go, and when to return? Do not speak these unkind words. You know how our father loves you; how we all love you. Brother, why do you talk of leaving us?’ While thus speaking, Temimah threw her arms round his neck and kissed his eyes, while a tear stood in her own.

Touched by her affection and her sorrow, Hassan replied in a gentler tone—

‘Temimah, I have no father, no mother, no sister here.’ He then proceeded to tell her the story of his infancy, as related by her mother, showing that he could claim no relationship in blood to the Sheik Sâleh and his family. As he continued his narrative, poor Temimah’s heart swelled with contending emotions. She learned that the playmate and companion of her childhood, the brother of whom she was so proud, and to whom she looked for support in all her trials, and whom she loved she knew not how much, he was a stranger to her in blood. A new and painful consciousness awoke within her; her arm must be withdrawn from his neck, her lips from his, perhaps for ever. Under the influence of this new and undefined sensation, her arm dropped from Hassan’s neck, but her hand remained clasped in his, and on it also fell her tears hot and fast,

while she sobbed so violently that he was alarmed at an emotion which he could not soothe or appreciate.

How strangely different are the instincts of the sexes in early youth ! Temimah was more than a year younger than Hassan, yet her heart whispered to her secret things, arising from the late disclosure, which were unknown to his. Although the idea of parting from her gave him pain, he could still caress her, call her sister, and bid her not to grieve for a separation which might be temporary, while she felt that henceforth she was divided by an impassable gulf from the brother of her childhood.

Slowly they returned to the encampment, and Temimah took the earliest opportunity of retiring into the privacy of her tent to talk with her own sad heart in solitude.

Did she love him less since she learnt that he was not her brother ? Did she love him more ? These were the questions which the poor girl asked herself with trembling and with tears ; her fluttering heart gave her no distinct reply.

Let us not, then, rashly intrude upon her hour of self-examination ; we like to chronicle as faithfully as we can the thoughts, and words, and actions of our *dramatis personæ*, but there are

secret thoughts in a young maiden's heart of hearts which she would fain conceal, not only from others, but from herself; into these it is surely neither gallant nor discreet for us to endeavour to pry, so we will leave Temimah, amid such repose as the night may bring, to conclude her meditations.

After the events related in the preceding pages, it is not to be wondered at if Hassan permitted but a few days to elapse ere he presented himself before Sheik Sâleh, and expressed his wish to leave the tents of the Oulad-Ali, in order to seek for his unknown parents; the Sheik being prepared for this request, and having made up his mind to acquiesce in it, offered but a faint opposition, notwithstanding his unwillingness to part with one whom he had so long considered and loved as a son.

‘By Allah!’ said he to the youth, ‘if destiny has written it, so it must be. My advice is, then, that you go to Alexandria where I have a friend, who, although a merchant and living in a town, has a good heart, and will be kind to you for my sake. I will write to him, and he will find you some employment. While you are with him you can make inquiry about the history and the families of the residents, Beys, Mamelukes, &c., and learn if any of them were at Cairo sixteen

years ago. If your search there is without success, you will find means to go to Cairo and other parts of Egypt, and, Inshallah, the wish of your heart will be fulfilled.'

Hassan thanked his fosterfather, who forthwith desired a scribe to be called to write from his dictation the required letter, which bore the address, 'To my esteemed and honored friend, Hadji Ismael, merchant in Alexandria.'

The simple preparations requisite for Hassan's departure were soon made, and all the articles found upon him when he had been left at the foot of the Pyramid, and which had been carefully preserved by Khadijah, were made over to him, and secured within the folds of his girdle and his turban; a horse of the Sheik's was placed at his disposal, and he was to be accompanied by two of the tribe, charged with the purchase of coffee, sugar, and sundry articles of dress.

When the day fixed for his departure arrived, his fosterparents embraced him tenderly, and the Sheik said to him—'Remember, Hassan, if ever you wish to return, my tent is your home, and you will find in me a father.'

Temimah, foolish girl, did not appear; she said she was not well; but she sent him her farewell and her prayers for his safety through her little

sister, who kissed him, crying bitterly. Thus did Hassan take leave of the tents of the Oulâd-Ali, and enter on the wide world in search of a father who had apparently little claim on his affection ; but youth is hopeful against hope, and sanguine against improbability, so Hassan journeyed onward cheerfully and without accident, until he reached Alexandria, where his two companions went about their respective commissions, and he proceeded to deliver his letter to Hadji Ismael, the merchant.

CHAPTER III.

HASSAN IS INTRODUCED TO HADJI ISMAEL, THE MERCHANT
—HE GIVES THE ALEXANDRIANS A SPECIMEN OF
BEDOUIN HORSE-DEALING AND HORSEMANSHIP.

HASSAN had no difficulty in finding the house of Hadji Ismael, the wealthy Arab merchant, situated in a quarter which was then near the centre of the town, though only a few hundred yards distant from the head of the harbour, known as the Old Port

Alexandria being now as familiar to the world of travellers and readers as Genoa or Marseilles, a description of its site and appearance is evidently superfluous ; only it must be remembered that at the time of which we are now writing it wore something of an Oriental aspect, which has since been obliterated by the multitude of European houses which have been constructed, and the still greater multitude of European dresses which crowd its bazaars.

The great square, which is now almost exclusively occupied by the residences of European consuls and merchants, was then an open area in which soldiery and horses were exercised; and in

place of the scores of saucy donkey-boys who now crowd around the doors of every inn and tavern, dinning into the ear of steamboat and railroad travellers their unvarying cry of ‘ Very good donkey, sir,’ and fighting among each other for customers with energy equal to that of Liverpool porters, there were then to be seen long strings of way-worn camels wending their solemn way through the narrow streets, whilst others of their brethren were crouched before some merchant’s door, uttering, as their loads were removed, that wonderful stomachic groan which no one who has heard it can ever forget, and which is said to have inspired and taught to the sons of Ishmael the pronunciation of one of the letters of their alphabet—a sound which I never heard perfectly imitated by any European.*

* *The Arabic letter ‘ain.’* The Turks and Persians, in whose respective languages this letter frequently occurs, never attempt to pronounce it otherwise than as a broad Italian A. As the same letter is found in the Hebrew alphabet, it may be an interesting speculation for the learned to consider how it was pronounced by the ancient Jews; the modern Jews in Germany and Asia pronounce it like the broad A. Its pronunciation seems to have puzzled the learned Seventy in the time of the Ptolemies; at least in the Septuagint version we find it represented by various Greek letters; for instance, in the words ‘Amalek’ and ‘Eli’ the commencing letter in Hebrew is ‘ain,’ as is likewise the last letter in the name of the prophet ‘Hoséa.’

Harsh and dissonant as may be the voice of the camel to our Frankish ears, it was infinitely less so to those of Hassan than were the mingled cries of the Turks, Italians, and Greeks assembled in the court-yard of Hadji Ismael's house, busily employed in opening, binding, and marking bales and packages of every size and class. Pushing his way through them as best he might, he addressed an elderly man whom he saw standing at the door of an inner court, and whom he knew by his dress to be a Moslem, and after giving him the customary greeting, he asked if he could have speech of Hadji Ismael. Upon being informed that the youth had a letter which he was charged to deliver to the merchant in person, the head clerk (for such he proved to be) desired Hassan to follow him to the counting-house.

On reaching that sanctum, Hassan found himself in a dimly-lighted room of moderate dimensions, the sides of which were lined with a goodly array of boxes; at the further end of the room, and in its right-hand corner, was seated a venerable man with a snow-white beard, who was so busily employed in dictating a letter to a scribe that he did not at first notice the entrance of his chief clerk, who remained silently standing near the door with his young companion; but when the

letter was terminated the merchant looked up, and motioned to them to advance. Mohammed, so was the chief clerk named, told him that the youth was bearer of a letter addressed to him by one of his friends among the Arabs. On a signal from Hadji Ismael, Hassan, with that respect for advanced age which is one of the best and most universal characteristics of Bedouin education, came forward, and having kissed the hem of his robe, delivered the letter, and retiring from the carpet on which the old man was sitting, stood in silence with his arms folded on his breast.*

The Hadji having read the letter slowly and carefully through, placed it on his knee, fixed his keen grey eyes upon Hassan, and continued his scrutiny for some seconds, as if, before addressing him, he would scan every feature of his character. The survey did not seem to give him dissatisfaction, for assuredly he had never looked upon a countenance on which ingenuous modesty, intelligence, and fearlessness were more legibly and harmoniously combined.

* For those who have not been in the East, it may be necessary to mention that the folding the arms on the breast, which in Europe is considered as a posture of meditation and sometimes of defiance, is among Orientals the usual attitude of humility and respect.

‘ You are welcome,’ said the old man, breaking silence ; ‘ you bring me news of the health and welfare of an old friend,—may his days be prolonged.’

‘ And those of the wisher,’ replied the youth.*

‘ Your name is Hassan, I see,’ continued the Hadji. ‘ How old are you ?’

‘ Just sixteen years,’ he replied.

‘ Sixteen years !’ exclaimed the Hadji, running his eye over the commanding figure and muscular limbs of the Arab youth. ‘ It is impossible ! Why, Antar himself, at sixteen years, had not a body and limbs like that. Young man,’ he continued, bending his shaggy grey brows till they met, ‘ you are deceiving me.’

‘ I never deceived any one,’ said the youth, haughtily ; but his countenance instantly resumed its habitual frank expression, and he added—‘ If I wished to learn to deceive, it is not likely that I should begin with the most sagacious and experienced of all the white-beards in Alexandria.’

‘ True,’ said the old man, smiling ; ‘ I did you wrong. But, Mashallah, you have made haste in your growth. If your brain has advanced as

* It is customary among the Arabs, when using either complimentary phrases or good wishes, to retort them on the speaker briefly, as in the text.

rapidly as your stature, you might pass for twenty summers. What can you do?’

‘Little,’ replied Hassan. ‘Almost nothing.’

‘Nay, tell me that little,’ said the merchant, good-humouredly; ‘with a willing heart ’twill soon be more.’

‘I can ride on camel or on horse, I can run, I can swim and dive, I can shoot and——’ here he paused, and the merchant added—

‘And I doubt not, from what my friend the Sheik writes, your hand is no stranger to the sword or lance; but, my son, all these acquirements, though useful in the desert, will not avail you much here,—nevertheless, we will see. Inshallah, your lot shall be fortunate; you have a forehead of good omen. God is great—He makes the prince and the beggar—we are all dust.’

To this long speech of the worthy merchant Hassan only replied by repeating after him, ‘God is great.’

Hadji Ismael then turned to his chief clerk, and told him that, as the youth was a stranger in the town and entrusted to him by an old friend, he was to be lodged in the house, and arrangement to be made for his board.

It would seem that Hassan’s forehead of good omen had already exercised its influence over the

chief clerk, for he offered without hesitation to take the youth under his own special charge, and to let him share his meals; an arrangement which was very agreeable to Hassan, who had begun to fear that he would be like a fish out of water,—he, a stranger in that confused mass of bricks and bales, ships and levantines.

On a signal from the merchant, Mohammed Aga retired with his young companion, and while showing him the store-rooms and courts of the house, drew him insensibly to speak of his life in the desert, and listened to his untutored yet graphic description with deepening interest.

Although born in Alexandria, the old clerk was of Turkish parentage, and had followed his professional duties with such assiduity and steadiness that he had never visited the interior of Egypt. He had frequent transactions with Arabs from the neighbourhood on the part of his master, but he usually found that, however wild and uncivilized they might appear, they were sharp and clever enough in obtaining a high price for the articles which they brought on sale; but a wild young Bedouin, full of natural poetry and enthusiasm, was an animal so totally new to the worthy clerk, that his curiosity, and ere long his interest, was awakened to a degree at which he was himself

surprised. It must be observed that Hassan, notwithstanding his extreme youth, was gifted with the intuitive sagacity of a race accustomed to read, not books, but men; his eye, bright and keen as that of a hawk, was quick at detecting anything approaching to roguery or falsehood in a countenance on which he fixed it, and that of Mohammed Aga inspired him with a sympathetic confidence, which in this instance was not misplaced.

On the following morning, the merchant had no sooner concluded his prayers and ablutions, than he sent for Mohammed Aga, and asked his opinion of the newly-arrived addition to their household.

‘By Allah!’ replied the clerk, ‘he seems a brave and honest youth, and were you Sheik of the Wâled-Ali* instead of Hadji Ismael the merchant, I doubt not he would have been a gain to your tent; but to what use you can put him in Alexandria I know not.’

‘You say truly,’ replied his master; ‘he is not a youth to sit on a mat in the corner of a count-

* Wâled-Ali is synonymous with Oulâd-Ali, the name of a tribe already introduced to the reader; the only difference is, that Wâled is singular and Oulâd plural. The former name, though less classical, is in more common use in Alexandria.

ing-house, or to go with messages from house to house, where knowledge of the Frank languages is required. But Allah has provided a livelihood for all his creatures : destiny sent the youth hither, and his fate is written.'

'Praise be to God!' said the clerk; 'my master's words are words of wisdom and truth: a visit to the holy cities (blessed be their names!) has opened the eyes of his understanding: doubtless he will discover the road which fate has marked out for this youth to travel; for it is written by the hand of the Causer of Causes.*

'True,' replied the merchant, 'there is no power or might but in Him; nevertheless, a wise writer has said—'When the shades of doubt are on thy mind, seek counsel of thy bed: morning will bring thee light.' I did so the past night, and see, I have found that Allah has sent me this Arab youth in a happy hour. Inshallah! his fortune and mine will be good. Do you not remember that I have an order to collect twenty of the finest Arab horses, to be sent as a present from Mahommed Ali to the Sultan. Neither you nor I have much skill in this matter, and those whom I consult in the town give me opinions exactly

* The Causer of Causes is one of the highest of the attributive names given by the Arabs to the Almighty.

according to the amount of the bribe they may have received from the dealer. We will make trial of Hassan at this trade, and, Inshallah ! our faces will be white in the presence of our Prince.*

‘ Inshallah !’ said the clerk, joyfully, ‘ my master’s patience will not be put to a long trial, for even now there are in the town three horses just arrived from Bahirah, which have been sent on purpose that you might purchase them on this commission. Does it please you that after the morning meal we should go to the Meidàn and see them ?’

‘ Be it so,’ said the Hadji. And Mohammed Aga, retiring to his own quarters, informed Hassan of the service on which it was proposed to employ him. The eyes of the youth brightened when he learnt that his vague apprehensions of a life of listless confinement were groundless, and that he was about to be employed on a duty for the discharge of which he was fitted by his early training and habits.

Mohammed observed the change in his coun-

* It has been the custom of the Egyptians, ever since the accession of Mohammed Ali to the Viceroyalty, to call the reigning Viceroy by the name of ‘ Effendina,’ ‘ our Lord,’ or ‘ our Prince.’

tenance, and thought it prudent to warn him against all the wiles and tricks to which he would be exposed among the Alexandrian dealers, kindly advising him to be cautious in giving an opinion, as his future prospects might depend much upon his first success. Hassan smiled, and thanked his new friend: he then added—

‘Mohammed, I have eaten the Hadji’s bread, and he is a friend of my father’s (the latter word he pronounced with a faltering voice). I will serve him in this matter faithfully. Until I am asked I shall say nothing, and when asked I shall say nothing beyond what I know to be true.’

The morning meal dispatched, Hadji Ismael proceeded to the Meidàn (then an open space, and now the great square of Alexandria), accompanied by Mohammed Aga, the sàis or groom, and Hassan. They found the horse-dealing party awaiting their arrival. It consisted of a dellâl or dealer, and two or three of his servants or associates, and an Arab from the neighbourhood of Damanhourî. They had two grey horses to dispose of, and apart from them, at a distance of some fifty yards, were two sàises holding by a strong halter a bay horse, which was pawing the ground, neighing, and apparently well disposed to wage

war with any biped or quadruped that might come within reach of its heels.

‘Peace be upon you,’ said the dellâl, addressing the merchant. ‘Inshallah ! I have brought you here two grey horses that are worthy to bear the Sultan of the two worlds—pure Arab blood—this dark grey is of the *Kohèil* race, and the light grey a true *Saklâwi*.’*

‘Are they young ?’ inquired the merchant.

‘One is four and the other five,’ was the ready reply.

The merchant then desired his sàis to inspect them and examine their mouths. They were both gentle and fine-looking animals, with splendid manes and tails, and their appearance prepos-
sessed the merchant in their favour. They stood close by the assembled group, and allowed their teeth to be examined with the most patient docility.

‘The marks are as the dellâl has said,’ reported the sàis, after having finished his inspection.

The animals were then mounted by one of the dellâl’s men, who walked and galloped them past the merchant, who seemed as well pleased with their paces as with their appearance.

* The *Kohèil* and *Saklâwi* are two of the highest breeds of horses found in the Hejd or highlands of Arabia.

‘What is their price?’ he inquired.

‘Their price,’ replied the dellâl, ‘should be very high, for they are pearls not to be found in every market, but to you, excellent Hadji, whom I wish to oblige, and whom I always serve with fidelity, they can be sold for sixty purses the pair (about 300*l*).’

During all this time Hassan had never spoken a word, neither had a single mark or movement of the horses escaped him; the merchant now turned towards him, saying—

‘My son, tell me your opinion of these horses; are they not very fine?’

‘They are not very bad,’ replied the youth, drily; ‘but they have many faults, and are much too dear.’

‘And pray what are their faults, master busybody?’ said the horsedealer in a rage.

‘I am not a busybody,’ answered Hassan, looking him steadfastly in the face; ‘I merely replied to a question put to me by our master the Hadji; as for their faults, if you do not know them better than I you are not fit to be a dellâl, and if you do know them, you must be a rogue to bring them here and endeavour to pass them on the Hadji at such a price?’

Words cannot paint the fury of the dellâl at

being thus addressed by a stripling whom he supposed to be as ignorant of his craft as the other attendants on Hadji Ismael ; the heavy courbatch* vibrated in his hand, and he was about to utter some violent or abusive retort, when the merchant interposing between them, said to the dellâl—

‘ Do not give way to anger, and remember if the words of the youth are not true they can do no harm either to you or to the sale of your horses.’

The worthy merchant forgot at the moment that it was probably the truth of the words which gave them all their sting ; but fate seemed resolved that the horsedealing transaction should not proceed amicably, for scarcely had the merchant concluded his pacific address to the dellâl when he heard behind him a sharp cry of pain, mingled with a sound resembling a blow, accompanied by the rattling of metal.

It seems that the Damanhourî Arab entertained a shrewd suspicion that Hassan was not a greenhorn in the matter of horseflesh, and while the

* Courbatch is the name of the whip made from the hide of the hippopotamus, in common use all over Egypt and Nubia. The name seems to have an affinity with the French ‘*cravache*,’ and I have been informed (though perhaps incorrectly) that it is of Hungarian origin.

merchant was making his pacific speech to the dellâl, he had crept to the side of the youth and whispered to him—

‘Brother, say nothing about the faults of the horses; say that they are very good; here is your bakshish’ (present), and so saying he slipped five Spanish dollars into Hassan’s hand.

The reply of the latter was to throw them with some force in the face of the speaker. Maddened by the pain and the insult, the Damanhourî drew a knife from his girdle and sprang upon the youth, but Hassan, whose activity was equal to his strength, caught the uplifted hand, wrenched the knife from its grasp, and placing one of his legs behind his assailant’s knee, threw him heavily to the ground. His blood was up, and the anger that shot from his eye and dilated his nostril produced such a change in his countenance that he was scarcely to be recognised; but the change lasted only a moment. Placing the knife in the hands of the astonished merchant, he briefly related to him the provocation which he had received, and the dollars still lying on the ground confirmed the tale. Attracted by the broil, several idlers and soldiers who were accidentally passing had now joined the party, and one whispered to another—

‘Mashallah, the youth must have a greedy

stomach. A bakshish of five dollars is dirt to him,' for it never entered into the head of any of these worthy Alexandrians to suppose that Hassan's indignation could arise from any other cause than dissatisfaction at the amount of the bribe offered to him.

Peace was at length restored, the Damanhourî having picked up his dollars and slunk away, muttering curses and threats against Hassan, to which the youth did not deign to make any reply. The merchant then asked him to state distinctly the faults that he found in the two grey horses.

'The dark one,' replied Hassan, 'is not of pure race; he is a half-breed, and is not worth more than ten purses. The light one is better bred, but he is old, and therefore not worth much more.'

'Old!' ejaculated the dellâl, his anger again rising; 'by your head, Hadji, your own sàis, who examined his teeth, said that he was only five.'

The eyes of the merchant and the dealer were now turned upon Hassan, whose only reply was a smile, and passing the forefinger of his right hand over that of his left, imitating the action of one using a file. This was a hint beyond the comprehension of the merchant, who asked him to explain his meaning.

‘I mean,’ he said, ‘that his teeth have been filed, and the marks in them artificially made;’* but his eyes, and head, and legs tell his age to any one that knows a horse from a camel.’

The dellâl was obliged to contain his rage, for not only was he restrained by the presence of the merchant and the bystanders, but the rough treatment lately inflicted on the Damanhourî did not encourage him to have recourse to personal violence. He contented himself, therefore, with saying in a sneering tone—

‘If the wise and enlightened merchant, Hadji Ismael, is to be led by the advice of a boy whose chin never felt a beard, Mashallah! it were time that the fishes swam about in the heaven.’

‘Allah be praised!’ replied the merchant, gravely, ‘truth is truth, even if it be spoken by a child. Friend dellâl, I will not dispute with you on this matter, but I will make a bargain with you, to which you will agree if you know that you have spoken truth. I will write to old Abou-Obeyed, whose tent is now among the Wâled-Ali. All men know that he is most skilled in Arab horses, and he is himself bred in the Nejd. He

* The practice in question is indeed as prevalent among the Arab dealers in Egypt, Syria, and Bagdad, as among those of London and Paris.

shall come here, and his bakshish shall be five purses. If he decides that all which you have stated of the race and age of these two horses is true, I will give you the full price that you have asked, and will pay him the bakshish. If his words agree with those spoken by this youth, I do not take the horses, and you pay the Sheik's bakshish.'

As the dellâl knew that the old Sheik Abouteyed valued his reputation too highly to allow himself to be bribed to a deception so liable to detection, he replied—

'It is not worth the trouble. Allah be praised, there are horses enough in Egypt and the desert; but if our master purchases none without the consent of that strange youth, methinks it will not be this year that he will send twenty to Stamboul. Doubtless he will now tell you that yonder bay is a vicious, useless brute, not worth the halter that holds him.'

'If he is not a vicious brute,' said Hassan, looking the dellâl full in the face and smiling, 'mount him, and let our master see his paces.'

The dellâl bit his lip at finding himself thwarted at every turn by the natural shrewdness of a mere stripling, for nothing was farther from his intention than to mount an animal whose

uncontrollable violence and temper were the sole cause of its being sent for sale by its present owner. It had not been backed for months, and the two sàises who held it by the head were scarcely able to resist the furious bounds which it made in its endeavour to free itself from thralldom. While the dellâl went towards them to assist them in leading it up for the inspection of the merchant, the latter turned to Hassan, saying—

‘My son, assuredly that is a vicious and dangerous beast. It can be no use my thinking of purchasing that for the great lords at Stamboul.’

‘Let us see it nearer,’ replied the youth, ‘perhaps we may learn whether it be play or vice. Mashallah!’ he muttered to himself as it drew nearer, snorting, and bounding, and lashing out its heels, ‘that is a horse—what a pity that it is cooped up in this town! Would that I had it on the desert, with my greyhound beside, and the antelope before me!’ His eyes glistened as he spoke, and the merchant, tapping him on the shoulder, said—

‘My son, you seem to like that horse better than the others. Is it not a vicious, dangerous brute?’

‘It is violent now,’ replied Hassan, ‘probably because it has been in hands that knew not how to

use it; but I do not see any signs of vice on its head. It is evidently quite young—three or four at most—and it has blood: more I cannot pretend to say.’

The noble colt had now cleared a respectable circle with his heels, as none of the bystanders chose to risk a near inspection, when the merchant, turning to the dellâl, said—

‘That seems a violent, intractable animal; what is its lowest price?’

‘When it is taught and a year older,’ replied the dealer, ‘it will be worth fifty purses. As it is, I can sell it to you for thirty.’

‘Tell him,’ whispered Hassan to the merchant, ‘to desire one of the sàises to ride it past you, that you may see its action.’

The Hadji did so, but the endeavour of the dealer and his sàises to comply with the request proved utterly fruitless. No sooner did one of them approach with the object of mounting, than he reared, backed, struck out with his fore-legs, and played such a variety of rough antics, that they could not come near him. Perhaps if the truth must be told, none of them were over-anxious to mount an animal in such a state of violent excitement, without a saddle, and with no bridle but the halter passed round the head, and

with one turn round the lower jaw. The merchant stroked his beard, and looked at the colt in dismay. Hassan drew near and whispered to him—

‘Tell the dellâl that it is a violent, unruly brute, and offer him twenty purses.’

The Hadji had by this time acquired so much confidence in the opinion of his young protégé, that he did so without hesitation. Then ensued a long bargaining conference between the merchant and the dellâl, which ended in the latter saying that he would take twenty-five purses and no less. The merchant looked at his young adviser, who said—

‘Close with him at that price.’

The merchant having done so, the dellâl said to him—

‘Hadji, the horse is yours: may the bargain be blessed.’ As he uttered the latter words there was a sardonic grin on his countenance which, if rightly interpreted, meant—‘Much good may it do you.’

The bargain being thus concluded, the dellâl thought it would be a good opportunity to vent the spite which he entertained against Hassan on the subject of the two grey horses; so he said to the merchant—

‘Perhaps this youth who has been so ready to offer his advice, and who wished that I or the sàises should mount the bay horse to show his paces, perhaps he will now do so himself.’

‘And why not?’ replied Hassan. ‘It is true that fools have made the horse foolish and unruly, but Allah made him to carry a rider. If the Hadji will give me leave, Inshallah! I will ride him now.’

‘You have my leave,’ said the merchant, ‘but run no risk of your life and limbs, my son.’

Hassan smiled, and going quietly forward, took the end of the halter from the nearest sàis, desiring the other at the same time to let go and leave him alone. He then approached the colt, looking steadfastly into its eye, and muttering some of the low guttural sounds with which the Bedouin Arabs coax and caress a refractory horse.

They seemed, however, to have no effect in this instance, for the colt continued to back, occasionally striking at Hassan with its fore-feet. Never losing his temper, nor for an instant taking his eye off that of the colt, he followed its retrograde movement, gradually shortening the halter, and narrowly escaped, once or twice, the blows aimed at him by its fore-feet.

At length the opportunity for which he had long been watching occurred. As the horse tried

to turn its flanks and lash at him with its hind feet, in a second, and with a single bound, he was on its back. It was in vain that the infuriated animal reared, plunged, and threw itself into every contortion to unhorse its rider. The more it bounded and snorted under him, the more proudly did his eye and his breast dilate. In the midst of all these bricks and houses he was again *at home*.

Shaking his right hand on high, as if he held a lance, and shouting aloud to give utterance to the boisterous joy within him, he dashed his heels into the ribs of the horse, and having taken it at full speed twice round the Meidàn, brought it back trembling in every joint from fear, surprise, and excitement. ‘Mashallah,’ ‘Aferin,’ (Bravo, bravo!) burst from every lip in the group. ‘A Rustum,’ cried old Mohammed Aga, delighted at his young friend’s triumph.

Hassan seemed, however, of opinion that the lesson was not complete—the horse was mastered, but not yet quieted. So he turned it round, and once more took it at full speed to the farthest end of the Meidàn; then leaning forward patted its neck, played with its ears, and spoke to it kind and gentle words, as if it could understand him. The subdued animal appeared indeed to do so, for

its violence had disappeared as if by magic, and when he took it back to the side of the merchant, it stood there seemingly as pleased as any one of the party.

‘I would give that imp of Satan twenty purses a year to be my partner,’ muttered the dellâl inaudibly to himself, as he turned away, and withdrew with the two rejected greys.

The merchant returned to his house in high spirits, and willingly acceded to Hassan’s request that, for some time at least, he should have sole charge of the new purchase. Hassan led the horse into the stable, fed and groomed it with his own hands, and, in the course of a few days, they were the best friends imaginable.

CHAPTER IV.

HASSAN'S RESIDENCE IN ALEXANDRIA—THE AUTHOR, BY WAY OF ENCOURAGING THE READER TO SKIP WHEN HE OR SHE FINDS IT CONVENIENT, MAKES A JUMP HIMSELF—ARRIVAL OF AN ENGLISH FAMILY; THEY LOOK OUT FOR A DRAGOMAN, AND FIND ONE WHO IS 'JUST THE THING.'

THE events recorded in the last chapter had created no little sensation in Alexandria, and Hassan's skill, courage, and, above all, his remarkable beauty of form and feature, were the general subject of conversation among those who had witnessed the merchant's purchase of the restive horse. All manner of speculations were afloat as to who or whence he was, for those who had most nearly observed him declared that, although his dress and language proclaimed the Bedouin Arab, his features seemed to be those of a Georgian or some northern race.

Many questions were addressed to Hadji Ismael on the subject by his friends, but he was either unable or unwilling to satisfy their curiosity. All that they could learn was that the youth had been sent to the merchant with a letter of recommendation from his old acquaintance,

Sheik Saleh, and that he was to be employed in the purchase of the collection of horses to be sent to Constantinople.

Meanwhile, Hassan passed his time much more agreeably than he had expected, for he had abundance of liberty and exercise in his new vocation, and was treated with the greatest kindness and confidence both by the merchant and by the chief clerk. One remarkable feature they found in his character—namely, that under no circumstances whatever did he deviate in the slightest degree from the truth. Whether money was concerned, or the relation of an event, they always found his statements confirmed, even in the most minute particular. He seemed, also, to have no care or thought of the acquisition of money, and these two features of character were so rare in Alexandria, that some of the merchant's friends, when speaking of his young protégé, were in the habit of shaking their heads and touching their foreheads significantly with the index-finger, thereby indicating that probably he was somewhat deranged.

These vague suggestions were confirmed by other traits of his character very different from other Alexandrian youths of his own age. He was never seen to enter a drinking-shop, nor to

idle and lounge about the bazaars. When not employed in exercising his horses, one of his favourite amusements was to go down to the beach for a swim in the sea. That boundless expanse of salt water was new to him: the more angry the surf, the more it seemed to please and excite him. When others shrunk from facing the yeasty seas that rolled upon the beach under the influence of a brisk north-wester, he would plunge in, alternately diving below or riding above them, with a rash fearlessness which often brought him a reproof from the prudent Mohammed Aga.

His frequent companion on these bathing excursions was Ahmed, the chief clerk's son, a lad of some twenty years of age, to whom, notwithstanding the difference in their characters, Hassan became much attached. He was short and slight in figure, with a pale but intelligent countenance, and remarkable for his studious and industrious habits. Having been for some time employed as a junior clerk of an English mercantile house (there were only *two* at that time in Alexandria), he had not only become a very good English scholar, but had acquired a fair knowledge of Greek and Italian. He was a bold and practised swimmer; but on one or two occasions when he had followed Hassan to enjoy his favourite pas-

time in the surf, he had received contusions which stunned him for the moment, and might have cost him dear, had not the powerful arm of his athletic comrade been always near and ready to assist him.

This companionship, which soon ripened into friendship, was not without its corresponding advantage to Hassan. His eager imagination had already drunk in with avidity the feats of Antar, Sindbad, and other heroes of Arab story; but his new friend could tell him yet stranger tales of the regions beyond the sea—regions where from cold the waters grew as hard as stone, and bore the passage of loaded wagons; where ships, by the aid of fire, sailed against the wind and stream, and where the inhabitants of one small island possessed and ruled at a distance of many thousand miles possessions five times larger and more populous than those of the great Sultan of Islam.

These narrations, and especially the last, excited so forcibly the ardent imagination of Hassan, that he was never weary of listening, and he prevailed upon his new friend one day to take him to the counting-house where he was employed, that he might see some of these wonderful islanders. Whether he expected to find in them marvellous beings, like the giants or jinns of Arab fiction, I

know not ; but certain it is, that after accompanying his friend to the house of Mr. —, whom he saw through an open door at the extremity of the counting-house, seated at a table writing letters and tying up papers, he went out again, with disappointment evidently written upon his countenance.

‘What tales are these which you have been telling me, Ahmed?’ said he to his companion ; ‘by Allah, that is no man at all ! He is smaller than I am ; he has not the beard of Hadji, and he has not even a scribe to write his letters !’

‘Hassan,’ replied his friend, smiling, ‘the habits of these islanders are different from those of Turks and Arabs. The pen is their sword in commerce, and they like to wield it themselves ; our chief writes on matters of importance with his own hand ; it is good ; for no scribe can betray him ; but in the adjoining room he has two or three clerks who write on his affairs from morning till night.’

Hassan shook his head, thought of the swift horse and the open desert, and said, ‘Allah be praised I am not a merchant of these islanders.’ Nevertheless there was something mysterious about their history which continued to excite his fancy, and as weeks and months passed on, they

found him, during the leisure hours of evening, employed in learning English from his friend, who, like most persons similarly engaged, improved himself while teaching another.

As Turkish was the language habitually spoken in the family of Mohammed Aga and in other places which Hassan's avocations led him to frequent, he soon acquired a sufficient knowledge of it to enable him to understand and converse in it with tolerable fluency.

It being an acknowledged privilege of readers to skip any portion of a tale which they find, or expect to find, dull and uninteresting, they cannot consistently blame an author if he indulges in an occasional jump, from which they derive an advantage at least equal to his own. Availing myself of this privilege, I will pass over cursorily the next three years of our hero's life, during which he remained in the employment of Hadji Ismael ; it is merely necessary to say that his manly frame fulfilled the promise of his youth ; his intelligence had been developed in equal proportion, without, however, effecting any unfavourable influence on the simple straightforwardness of his character.

The Hadji never repented having trusted him implicitly in every commission with which he had been charged, and had procured for him a

teacher under whose instructions he had learnt to read Arabic, and even to write a legible hand ; but Hassan, though ready and quick of apprehension, did not evince any fondness for the study of books ; his pleasures were a ride on the back of a fiery horse or a crested wave, and listening after sunset to the popular Arab romances of old, recited by some wandering *ràwi*.*

Of these last he was so fond, that he knew many of them almost by heart. Stories of princes and princesses in disguise, mingled with the mystery hanging over his own birth, floated in his imaginative brain, but the mystery remained unravelled. He had kept the secret confined to his own breast, never even communicating it to his friend Ahmed ; nevertheless from him, from his father, and from all his acquaintance, he had diligently inquired into the early history of all the Turkish Pashas, Beys, and officers in Alexandria, but no known episode of their lives threw any light upon the object of his search. His passions were strong and turbulent, but he generally kept them under the control of a determined will, and the secret conviction that he was the son of

* A *ràwi* is a professional reciter of romances, around whom a circle of listeners may always be seen gathered about sunset in Alexandria or Cairo.

‘somebody’ imparted to his character a certain pride and reserve which assorted better with his form and features than with his outward condition of life.

Connected with the mystery of his birth and with the events related in the wild tales with which he had fed his youthful imagination, was the image of a lovely princess whom he had clothed with all the attributes of beauty ascribed by Arab poetry to such damsels; waking or dreaming she was constantly before his eyes; he had given her a name, in pronouncing which he used to sing himself to sleep, and he loved this creature of his imagination with all the ardent fondness of a young and passionate heart.

If it be true that such visionary dreams of youth are necessarily followed by disappointment on awaking to the rude realities of life, it is also true that in some cases, as in his, they preserve those who are under their influence from the grosser temptations to which that age is exposed. It is one of the evils of modern education in what we are pleased to call highly-civilized countries, to cultivate the understanding at the expense of the heart. The simplicity, the trusting confidence, the warm imagination, the love of all that is pure, and high, and holy, which are the proper attributes

of youth, are sacrificed to what is termed a practical knowledge of the world, and the result is, that there is now many a young gentleman at Eton and Oxford who would listen with a sneer of contempt to a sentiment or a trait of character which would have drawn a tear of sympathy and admiration from the eye of a Burke or a Fox, a Pascal or a Newton.

To return from this digression. Hassan loved his imaginary princess; nevertheless, like a true lover, he put her in the deepest corner of his heart, and never spoke of her; so his friend Ahmed remained in total ignorance of her existence even in the world of imagination.

Having now, with our reader's permission, brought our hero by means of a very convenient and permissible jump of three years, to man's estate, I would fain get on with my story, but that unlucky phrase, 'man's estate,' which has just slipped from my pen, entails another digression.

In common parlance it is applied to an individual, whether gentle or plebeian, who has just emerged from his teens, and the 'estate' at which he is said to arrive consists (in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred) in the discovery that he must set to work in earnest to gain his bread. For-

tunate indeed is he if the said estate be not incumbered with sundry unsettled bills incurred during the above-mentioned careless and happy teens, which an incensed parent or guardian threatens to deduct from any portion or inheritance hereafter due to him.

‘A plague on such an estate,’ say I; so I will repudiate the phrase, and simply state that as Hassan has now reached the age of manhood, and is endowed with qualities sufficient to make him a hero if the Fates will only permit him to become one, it is time to introduce to the reader’s notice certain other persons who arrived at this period in Alexandria, and whose history is more or less connected with the sequel of our tale.

Among these recent arrivals, the first place is due to an English family named Thorpe, the paterfamilias of which was an elderly gentleman of liberal fortune and education, whose passion for antiquarian pursuits had led him to visit the land of the Pyramids at a period when such an excursion was not, as now, a recognised fashionable winter tour, nor facilitated by steamboats and railroads.

He was a simple-minded, kind-hearted old gentleman, not endowed with any remarkable share of learning or ability, but he had pursued his

search for antiquities with so much industry in Italy and Greece, as well as in England, that the library on the ground-floor of his house in Portman-square almost deserved the name of a museum, although the specimens which it contained were devoid of all arrangement and classification, and were included by his faithful spouse (whenever she was out of her husband's hearing) under the general, but not complimentary, denomination of 'rubbish.'

Mrs. Thorpe had been the daughter of a city merchant, and was in almost every respect the antipodes of her husband. He was tall and thin, she was short and fat ; she despised the antiquities which he worshipped; and the London dinners, and play-goings, and card-parties, and soirées which were her delight, were to him gall and wormwood. It is marvellous how such a couple ever came together under the hymeneal yoke, but notwithstanding the total discrepancy between their tastes and characters, they were fortunately both goodhearted people, and thus they found that, by alternately yielding a point or a predilection to each other, they jogged along the vale of matrimonial life without any serious disagreement or disturbance.

One of their earliest disputes had been concern-

ing the name to be given to their first-born son, and notwithstanding all the entreaties and protestations of his wife, Mr. Thorpe had carried his point, and brought back his child from the christening adorned with the illustrious name of Selden. He had, however, made a compromise, by promising that in case she should again add a member to the Thorpe family, its name should be left to her own selection. Fate ordained that after eighteen months she should give birth to a daughter, on whom, with her husband's entire approval, she bestowed her own name, 'Emily.'

Selden Thorpe and his sister, who both accompanied their parents to Egypt, had respectively attained the ages of twenty and eighteen and a half. The young man, after being educated at an English public school, had spent the last two years at a German University, where he had imbibed a considerable amount of desultory learning, scepticism, and beer. He was not without natural talents, but they had been tortuously directed, and he was habitually disposed to turn into ridicule everything and everybody that came under the obnoxious denomination of 'respectable.' His father having noticed this tendency, had resolved to keep him for another year under the tuition of a professor, from whom he hoped that his son

would acquire habits of order and study; but with the blindness belonging to parents who have a besetting taste or predilection, instead of selecting as a tutor a man of enlarged views and commanding character, he had chosen one reputed to possess classical and antiquarian knowledge, and a certain proficiency in the Oriental languages.

Dr. Hieronymus Moss—for so was the tutor named—was indeed a gentleman of very high pretensions in the above-mentioned branches of literature, and having previously been for two years tutor to a young lord on the grand tour of Europe, he thought accompanying the Thorpes on this expedition an act of great condescension on his part. Notwithstanding these high pretensions, he was in fact a shallow pedant, while in respect to the classical and Oriental languages, which formed the basis of his assumed attainments, the reader will have an opportunity of passing his own sentence on the Doctor before the conclusion of this tale.

The best point in Selden Thorpe's character was his affection for his sister Emily—a warm-hearted girl, who had just acquired the last graces of a ladies' finishing school in Harley-street. Notwithstanding certain weaknesses which the Thorpe educational system had tended to foster

in her character, she was altogether a very attractive young lady: her beauty was undeniable—beauty of a true English cast—regular features, bright blue eyes, brown hair, and a fair transparent complexion. More than one young Guardsman had whispered to her that she was ‘killing;’ and her looking-glass suggested that they were not far wrong. If the truth must be told, Emily was something of a coquette, and was as passionately devoted to novels as her father was to antiquities.

The attendants on the Thorpe family consisted of Mr. Foyster, butler and valet de chambre, whose character will be developed in the sequel, and Mary Powell, the ladies’ maid, a simple, good-humoured girl from Sussex, with laughing black eyes, who had quitted her native village only a few weeks before the family left England, and who looked up to Mr. Foyster with considerable awe. That important personage condescended to patronize her—whether in consideration of her humility or of her black eyes it is not necessary to state.

Hotels in Alexandria being, at the period of which we write, few in number and scant in accommodation, the Thorpes had taken up their temporary abode in a house procured for them by Mr. ———, the British merchant before referred

to, who had also undertaken the task of procuring a dragoman to accompany them on their excursion up the Nile.

That class of attendant, whose name at present, both in Alexandria and Cairo, is legion, was at that time very limited in number, especially as Mr. Foyster insisted 'that a confident knowledge of English was a sinecure noun'—by which expression he conveyed his opinion that a competent knowledge of English was a *sine quâ non*. Several candidates who presented themselves at the Thorpes' were rejected on account of deficiency in this important particular. At length Mr. Foyster, who had spent a whole morning in making the round of the counting-houses and taverns, returned accompanied by a Greek, whom he described to his master as 'the very thing we want.'

He was a small, active-looking man, named Demetri, a Smyrniote by birth, possessed of a fair smattering of all the languages spoken in the Levant. His dark hair escaping from under a Greek cap jauntily set on one side of his head, his restless and piercing eye, that seemed to divine your meaning before you expressed it, his embroidered jacket and silk sash, in which was stuck a jewelled dagger, the ample trousers, and red

morocco shoes, which completed his costume, prepossessed the ladies at once in his favour; Mrs. Thorpe remarking, in a low voice, that he looked clean and active, and Emily observing in a similar tone that his costume was charmingly picturesque.

Mr. Thorpe having addressed to him one or two simple questions in English, Demetri replied to them with considerable volubility and a most unembarrassed air, but with so strange an accent that they could only catch a few words of what he said. Doctor Hieronymus Moss, who had been brushing up his Arabic diligently for the last few days with grammar and dictionary, addressed him in that language with an imposing air, saying—

‘My friend, you must speak slower.’

Demetri, whose cool effrontery was equal to any ordinary emergency, was quite taken aback by this address in an unknown tongue. He knew that it was not English, but for what language it was meant he could not tell. Thinking, however, that a random guess was better than an awkward silence, he replied in Turkish.

‘Sir, I know Turkish, Arabic, Greek, Italian, and English; but I do not speak German.’

It was now the Professor’s turn to look mystified. He had caught the names of several

countries, but the closing sentence was a riddle to him,* and thinking it better not to venture further out of his depth, he said with becoming gravity to Mr. Thorpe—

‘The young man seems well skilled in several European and Oriental languages.’

This praise from so high an authority, backing the selection of Mr. Foyster, and supported by the approbation of the ladies, secured the engagement of Demetri as dragoman to the Thorpe Nile expedition, at a salary of twenty dollars a month.†

This affair being settled, Mr. Foyster retired with his new colleague. The faces of both wore an expression of satisfaction; that of the butler being the satisfaction of possession, that of Demetri the satisfaction of anticipation; for he it known that the butler had exacted a promise from Demetri of a payment of five dollars a month out of his salary if he succeeded in obtaining the

* The German language and the Austrian people are termed in Turkish and Arabic ‘Nemseh,’ a name which has no affinity of sound with its European original.

† Twenty dollars a month was at that time considered an extravagantly high salary for a dragoman; of later years the more pretentious of these harpies of the Nile have been known to demand and obtain fifty, and even sixty, dollars a month.

appointment. Demetri was of far too sanguine a temperament and too fertile a genius to regret the sacrifice of one-fourth of his salary, when he felt confident of tripling the amount by what he would have termed the legitimate emoluments of his employment.*

The first duty of these two worthies was to secure and to fit up with every possible convenience

* In narrating Demetri's conversations with Mr. Foyster, I shall not in general attempt to render his meaning in his own broken and imperfect English; such a practice is sometimes permissible in a farce or comedy, but in a continuous narrative it seems to me tedious in the extreme; for a similar reason I may here add, once for all, that I avoid as far as I can overloading my text with Oriental phrases and idioms. They occur with great frequency, and certainly add a certain charm to that delightful work 'Hadji Baba;' but independently of the fact that the idiomatic expressions current in Persia are in themselves more quaint and droll than those in use among Egyptians and Arabs, the novelty once worn away, the charm of such phraseology disappears with it. Mr. Morier has reaped the first harvest of amusement offered to an English reader by such phrases as 'Is your palate fat?'—'Whose dog is he?' &c. &c.; and none who follow in the same field can expect to be more than a gleaner. Nevertheless, it is impossible for one who has long lived in the East to describe Oriental scenes without occasionally falling into the phrases and images commonly used in the country. If they are not sought for as ornaments, but are put down as they naturally occur, they give to the picture a certain colouring which is not without its use, as exhibiting the habitual tone of thought and expression in the country described.

the dahabiáh or Nile-boat requisite for the excursion, and as this was an occupation which afforded to both an opportunity of exhibiting their zeal and ingenuity in identifying their own interests with the comfort of the Thorpes, they set about the task with a commendable energy.

Several boats were examined and contemptuously rejected as too small ; another of large dimensions was found, the owner of which agreed to give it for the whole winter for one hundred and fifty pounds, but as he would not make to Demetri a present of more than ten pounds, his boat was also rejected. After a search of some days, they found a dahabiáh which promised to be (what Demetri had been so lately pronounced to be) 'the very thing.' It belonged to a pasha who was absent on service, and had left with his wakeel (agent) a discretionary power to let his boat, which was large and handsomely decorated. This wakeel, being a Greek, was also an acquaintance of Demetri's, which rendered the bargaining extremely easy and satisfactory to both parties. It was accordingly proposed that Mr. Thorpe should pay two hundred and fifty pounds for the six winter months, the wakeel refunding from that amount fifteen pounds to Demetri, and a like sum to Mr. Foyster.

Mr. Thorpe was informed, on consulting the English merchant, that the charge was unusually high ; but, considering the difficulty of finding in those days a boat capable of conveying so large a party, the bargain was concluded, and the ratifications duly exchanged, Mr. Foyster observing to himself, as he carried the paper back from the Consulate to his master's lodgings—‘ Well, this here Egypt is not such a bad country after all.’

Then followed the important process of cleaning and furnishing the boat with tables, sofas, curtains, &c., and laying in the multifarious stores requisite for the voyage, in all of which Demetri took care that the lion's share of the profit fell to his lot.

CHAPTER V.

HASSAN GOES WITH MOHAMMED AGA TO DAMANHOUR—
WHAT BEFEL HIM THERE.

WHILE the preparations mentioned in the last chapter were going forward, Hassan was absent from Alexandria, the Hadji having sent him, in company with Mohammed Aga, to collect a debt of considerable amount due to him in Damanhour, a large village distant a day's journey from the city.

This affair occupied some little time, and might not, perhaps, have been settled at all, had not Mohammed Aga been provided with a handsome Cashmere shawl and a pretty Damascus handkerchief, in one corner of which a few gold pieces were secured by a silken cord. The former of these presents found its way to the Governor, and the latter to his chief scribe, after which the justice of the claim became as clear as day, and the debtor was ordered to pay up without delay.

While this affair was in progress, and Mohammed Aga was busy in the Governor's divan, Hassan was one day strolling near the village to pass the time, when his ear was arrested by the sound of

female cries and lamentations. Turning his head to the quarter whence the sounds proceeded, he saw a man with his hands chained together, walking between two soldiers, who occasionally hastened his steps by blows from the butt ends of their muskets. Behind them were two women and two children, screaming at the top of their voices—

‘Oh ! mercy, mercy ! Oh ! my brother ! Oh ! my husband ! Oh ! my father ! Mercy, mercy !’

In front of this lamenting group, and by the side of one of the soldiers, walked an individual with a paper in his hand, who seemed to be the man under whose authority the prisoner had been seized, and who bore the appearance of being one of the kawàsses of the Governor.*

‘May your day be fortunate, O Aga,’ said Hassan, addressing him in the Turkish language.† ‘What is the fault of this man, and whither are you taking him ?’

* A kawàss, or janissary, in Egypt, is an upper servant in attendance on a Pacha, a Consul, or a person of rank ; he is generally a Turk, wears a sword, and is frequently dignified by the title of Aga.

† Hassan’s experience seems to have taught him that in addressing Turkish officials, the use of that language in place of Arabic is the likeliest method of obtaining attention and a courteous reply.

‘ Happily met, Aga,’ said the kawàss, impressed by the commanding figure of the young stranger. ‘ This vagabond is now nearly two years in arrear of his taxes due to the Government ; his tents are near the edge of the desert, and we never could find him. Praise be to Allah, I have got him now, and to-morrow we shall see whether five hundred good blows on the soles of his feet will help him to find the two thousand piasters that he owes.’*

The prisoner maintained a dogged silence, never even raising his eyes to look at the kawàss while speaking ; but his wife now rushed forward, and, throwing herself at Hassan’s feet, cried out—

‘ Mercy, mercy, young Aga ! I and my children, our sister, we are all ruined. We have none to depend on but him. The sluices of the canal were not opened ; our lands were dried up. We had no crop ; we sold our animals ; everything is gone. Speak to the Governor, young Aga ; let him give us time and we will pay all.’

Hassan turned aside his head to hide his emotion, for to misery, and to woman’s misery above all, his heart was soft as a child’s. Recovering himself, however, in a moment, he turned to the kawàss, saying—

* Two thousand piasters are about twenty pounds sterling.

‘Would the Governor not excuse or delay the payment of this sum?’

‘Surely not,’ said the other, decidedly. ‘His Excellency is very angry with him for the trouble he has already given: the amount is entered in the accounts, and it must be paid. You are young, sir, and a stranger here; you do not know the marvellous power of the sticks in bringing to light hidden money; they are more powerful than the rods of the Cairo magicians.’

‘By Allah!—by the life of your mother!’ screamed the poor woman, still at Hassan’s feet, ‘we have nothing; they may kill us, but we have no money to give. For weeks past we have seen no bread, and eaten nothing but a few dates. We are miserable, O Aga!—look at us—mercy, mercy!’ The emaciated appearance of the whole family bore witness to this part of the woman’s statement.

‘My friend,’ said Hassan, turning to the kawàss, ‘I know a merchant in Damanhour who will perhaps advance this money, and take a bond for repayment in one or two years. Promise me that you will not report this man’s seizure till to-morrow at noon: the Governor will be better pleased with your zeal if you are then able to present him with the money required, than if you beat the man to

death without perhaps obtaining a third of it. Promise then that you will wait till to-morrow at noon.'

'I will wait as you desire,' replied the kawàss; 'and if you come to the guard-house where this fellow will be confined, ask for Ibrahim the kawàss.'

During all this time the eyes of the unhappy wife were fixed upon Hassan's countenance with an expression of intense anxiety. She had not understood a syllable of the conversation that had passed between him and the kawàss, but instinct taught her that in some way he was befriending her husband's cause; and as the latter moved on with his guards, she continued to overwhelm him with blessings and prayers, mingled with tears.

'Be of good cheer,' he said to her, now speaking in his own language. 'Inshallah! all will yet go well. Meanwhile take this, and buy some bread this evening for your children and yourselves'—and as he spoke he slipped a piece of silver into her hand, and turned hastily away.

When the poor woman heard herself addressed in the deep and not to be mistaken tones of a Bedouin Arab, and felt in her hand the money that he had given to her, surprise and gratitude deprived her for a moment of the powers of speech;

and Hassan was already at some distance when she recovered them ; and throwing herself into her sister's arms, she exclaimed—

‘ He will save us !—he will save us !—he is not a Turk !—why did I call him Aga ?—he is of the Sons of the Tent*—surely my husband and he have met before in the desert and been friends—he will save us—the blessing of Allah be on his head !’

That same evening, at sunset, Mohammed Aga and Hassan were smoking their pipes and drinking their coffee in front of their lodging, when the former said to his companion—

‘ Inshallah ! we will return in a day or two to Alexandria. Our affair is proceeding well : I have collected half the money, and the remainder is to be paid to-morrow.’

* Arabs are divided into two classes, distinguished in their own language by the names of ‘ People of the tent’ and ‘ People of the domicile ;’ the former, who are the Bedouins, and nomadic in their habits, have a sovereign contempt for the latter, who live in villages and cultivate the soil. In Egypt there are found on the borders of the Desert and arable land a few small tribes who partake of both characters ; that is, though Bedouins by birth, they have partially settled down to an agricultural life, and pay a tax to the Government for the land which they occupy. The prisoner now under arrest would seem to have belonged to this latter class.

Hassan made no direct reply to this address, but after a pause of a few minutes he abruptly asked the chief clerk—

‘Do you remember how much of my salary is still due to me, in your hands?’

‘Assuredly I do, my son,’ said the methodical clerk; ‘at the beginning of the year the arrears of salary, added to what the Hadji allowed of percentage on purchases, amounted to four thousand piasters (40*l.*) ; then at the feast you sent a present of a bale of tobacco and a Persian dagger to your father the Sheik : two pieces of Syrian silk and some embroidered napkins to your mother : two pieces——’

‘Enough, enough!’ interrupted Hassan, distressed at this enumeration of the mementos which he had sent to his fosterparents; ‘how much remained after these presents were paid for?’

‘They cost fifteen hundred piasters; so you still have two thousand five hundred left.

‘That is well,’ said Hassan. ‘I want that money here. Will you give it me, Mohammed, and repay yourself from the chest in Alexandria?’

‘The boy is mad,’ said the old clerk, opening his eyes wide with astonishment. ‘By the head of your father, tell me for what purpose can you

require all that money at once, here at Damanhour? Are you going to buy beans and wheat for the market?’

‘No,’ replied Hassan, with some confusion, ‘it is not my trade to purchase grain, but indeed I require that money, and hope you will let me have it.’

‘Allah-Allah!’ said the old clerk, as a sudden suspicion shot across his mind, ‘you have seen some Damanhour girl who has set your heart on fire! The songs tell us that the girls are famed for their beauty here: you have seen a moon-faced one behind a curtain, and you are going to be married! Wallah-Billah! brimstone and tinder are like wet clay when compared to the heart of a youth.’

‘Indeed,’ said Hassan, laughing, ‘I have seen no moon-faced houri here, and I have no thoughts of marriage.’ He added more gravely—‘I want the money for a purpose which I cannot tell you, though if I did, you could not disapprove it.’

Mohammed Aga, seeing that opposition was useless, and feeling that he had in truth no right to keep back from Hassan what was his own, counted out the money to him the same evening, and took his receipt, to be presented to Hadji Ismael.

The following morning, about three hours after sunrise, when Hassan had made sure that the chief clerk was busily employed in the Governor's divan, he bent his steps to the guard-house, and on asking for Ibrahim the kawàss, was at once admitted to the presence of that important official.

After the customary salutations, Hassan informed him that the merchant to whom he had yesterday alluded, had agreed to advance the money, and that he was now prepared to pay the two thousand piasters due by the Arab, on receiving a discharge in full for the debt, sealed by the proper officer in the divan.

'That is easily done,' said the kawàss; 'take a pipe and a cup of coffee, and in five minutes the paper will be here.'

Having given the requisite instructions to one of his subordinates, he resumed the conversation with Hassan upon general topics, it being apparently indifferent to him to know what merchant in Damanhour could be so foolish as to advance money of which he would never be repaid a farthing.

In a few minutes the messenger returned, bringing a paper bearing the seals of the treasurer and chief scribe of the Governor's divan, and setting forth that Abou-Hamedi, of the Gemeâl

tribe, having discharged all the taxes and charges due by him up to date, was free to return to his place of abode.

Hassan having paid the money and placed the document in his girdle, inquired of the kawàss where the prisoner was confined, and whether he could see him alone.

‘He is in the room at the back of that small yard,’ replied the kawàss, ‘where you see the sentry walking before the door. I will tell him to open it and come away, as his service is no longer required. You will not find the Arab alone, because, as you had taken an interest in him, I allowed his family to remain with him.’

‘May your honour increase and your days be long,’ said Hassan, saluting him, and going towards the door of the cell, which the sentry, by desire of the kawàss, opened, and then came away.

On entering the chamber, Hassan found that it was more spacious than he had expected, and was partially lighted by two apertures near the roof, secured by cross-bars of iron. The place being considered sufficiently secure, the manacles had been removed from the hands of the Arab, and he was seated on the floor, his sister and wife beside him, and his children at his feet.

No sooner did Hassan enter the room than the

wife sprang from her sitting posture, crying aloud—

‘It is he ! it is he ! we shall be saved yet.’

Abou-Hamedî also arose, and all the rest of the family came crowding towards Hassan. The Arab, who had been informed the preceding evening by his wife of our hero’s generous intentions, as well as of his having provided them with the bread on which they had supped, now expressed to him briefly, but with much emotion, the gratitude which he felt for the sympathy he had shown him.

‘You are of the Desert blood,’ he said ; ‘and whether Allah give success to your endeavours or not, you have our thanks.’

‘Brother, you are free,’ said Hassan ; ‘free as the winds of the desert ; here is the Government receipt for your debt ; and as you have been stripped of all, and must have something wherewith to recommence your toil for a livelihood, here are five hundred piasters ; put them in your girdle ; fate is uncertain, Allah only is enduring ; I am now rich, some day I may be poor and you rich, then you may repay me.’

Words cannot paint the tumultuous joy of those poor women as they crowded to kiss the hands and feet of Hassan, calling every blessing

of heaven on his head. The wife, however, on looking at her husband's countenance as he almost mechanically took the document and the money which Hassan placed in his hand, was frightened at its strange and wild expression ; no word of satisfaction or gratitude escaped from his lips, as seizing Hassan by the arm he drew him to a part of the cell where a stray sunbeam forced its way through the barred aperture ; when it fell on Hassan's face, the Arab, scanning his features with eyes almost starting from their sockets, said—

‘ Yes, yes ; years have passed ; the youth has become a man ; the eye, the voice, the form, are only his ! Speak,’ he continued, almost savagely ; ‘ do you remember one who strove to stab you in the Meidàn of Alexandria, and whom you threw to the ground by a wrestling trick ? ’Twas I ! ’twas I ! and had you known me yesterday, instead of giving me money and freedom, you would have gone to that cursed Turk's divan to feast your eyes with a sight of my mangled feet.’ So saying, he dashed the paper and the money furiously on the ground.

‘ Brother,’ replied Hassan, gravely, ‘ I knew you yesterday at the first glance as well as you know me now. You were in misfortune and misery, and all that had passed before was forgotten.’

For a moment the evil passions struggled for the mastery in that wild breast ; it was but for a moment ; the sight of his children and of the paper which secured his freedom called up the better feelings of his rude nature, and casting himself into Hassan's arms, he wept like a child.

Without having read or heard of the Scriptures, the generous impulse of Hassan's heart had taught him how to 'heap coals of fire on the head of an enemy ;' and the deadly hatred which Abou-Hamedi had entertained against him since the day of their first meeting was melted in a moment.

It was difficult for Hassan to tear himself away from the overflowing gratitude of the Arab's family. One only, the unmarried sister, had preserved a continuous silence, as became her condition ; but she looked upon her brother's preserver with eyes swimming in tears, and when he bade them farewell and left the room, she felt as if all life and sunshine had departed with him.

Little did Abou-Hamedi know when he thrust into his girdle the five hundred piasters, given him by Hassan, that the latter had not even a dollar left. He had said, 'I am rich,' and in truth rich he was—rich in youth, and strength, and hope—rich in the esteem and affection of his

employer—above all, rich in the possession of a heart which felt in giving his all to relieve distress a pleasure unknown to the miser who has found a treasure.

Hassan remained outside the guard-house talking to the kawàss on various subjects until he had seen Abou-Hamedî and his family clear of its precincts, and retiring unmolested in the direction of the desert. The Arab looking back once at the retreating figure of his preserver, muttered to himself—‘Allah preserve you, brave youth. If ever you meet Abou-Hamedî again when you are in need, you shall find that he remembers good as well as evil; but we will leave this cursed district, where sorrow and tyranny pursue us; we will go to our cousins who have their tents near Fayoom.’*

When Mohammed Aga met his young friend in the evening, he asked whether he had commenced that wonderful speculation which he kept so secret.

‘It is all laid out already,’ replied Hassan, smiling.

‘Hasty bargains lead to repentance,’ said the

* Fayoom is a fertile region in Upper Egypt, on the left bank of the Nile.

old clerk, shaking his head ; ‘ pray what ‘ makseb’ (profit) do you expect to make ?’

‘ It has paid me a good interest already, and I am quite satisfied. Do not ask me any more about it,’ said Hassan, looking rather confused, for concealment was foreign to his nature.

Mohammed Aga refrained from asking him any more questions, but, partly from curiosity and partly from the interest which he felt in Hassan’s welfare, he was determined before leaving Daman-hour to learn how he had disposed of his little property. Nor was the task by any means difficult ; for in small towns in the east as well as in the west everybody knows and talks about everything that everybody says or does. The chief clerk, therefore, had no difficulty on the following day in tracing Hassan to the guard-house, where he had been seen talking to Ibrahim the kawàss. To find that well-known individual was the work of a few minutes, and a few more spent with him over a cup of coffee and a pipe drew from him all that he knew of the transaction, including the release of the Arab family on Hassan’s paying their debt of two thousand piasters. ‘ You see, Aga,’ added the kawàss, concluding his narrative, ‘ it was my duty to release them when the money was paid, and not to inquire whence it came ; but if you are

the merchant whom the young man mentioned as willing to advance it on any security offered by the Arab, why I fear—' Here he looked very significantly at Mohammed, and threw out a long puff of smoke from his chibouque.

'Then you think the Arab cannot pay back the money?' inquired Mohammed.

'Not a dollar of it,' answered the kawàss. 'The Governor would have ordered him the bastinado as an example to others, but two bad seasons have left the poor devil's purse as empty as my pipe.' So saying he shook out its ashes, and left Mohammed to his own meditations.

'That boy will never have a farthing to bless his grey hairs with! Money in his hand is like water in a sieve, and yet, and yet,'—here the old clerk passed the back of his hand across his eyes, —'Allah bless him an hundredfold.' He walked slowly home, and without saying a word to Hassan of his meeting with the kawàss, he told him that, as the affairs for which they had come to Damanhour were now settled, they might return to Alexandria, which they did on the following day without meeting with accident or adventure by the way.

The morning after their return Mohammed Aga went to the private room of the merchant to deliver the money which he had collected, and

give a general account of his mission, in doing which he placed in the Hadji's hands Hassan's receipt for two thousand five hundred piasters.

'By your head,' said the merchant to his clerk, 'tell me what has the youth done with that money at Damanhour?'

Mohammed then told him the whole story from beginning to end, as related by the kawàss.

'And what has he left in your hands?' inquired the merchant, walking up and down the room in evident emotion.

'Nothing,' replied the clerk. 'Two thousand five hundred piasters were due to him; two thousand he paid for the liberation of the Arab, and I doubt not that he gave him the remainder.'

'Mohammed,' said the merchant, after a silence of some minutes, 'as he wished to keep this secret, do not mention it to any one, nor let him know that you have told it to me. If it were spoken about, it would take from the youth the pleasure he now derives from it, and what say the traditions of the Prophet (on whose name be glory and peace!)—'The good deeds done by the faithful in secret, He shall reward them openly on the day of judgment.''

CHAPTER VI.

HASSAN APPEARS IN THE CHARACTER OF 'ORLANDO' IN 'AS YOU LIKE IT'—HE RECEIVES A LIBERAL OUTFIT FROM HIS PATRON, AND PREPARES TO LEAVE FOR CAIRO WITH MR. THORPE'S PARTY.

A FEW days after the events recorded in the last chapter, it happened that Mr. Foyster and Demetri were walking homeward from the bazaar, where they had been making some purchases for the boat, when they fell in with Hassan, who was also returning towards the house of Hadji Ismael.

Hassan was well acquainted with Demetri, who had frequently amused his leisure hours with tales of the countries he had visited, and the wonderful feats he had performed, in which latter branch the Greek had drawn far more liberally on his invention than on his memory. The youth had also seen Mr. Foyster at the British merchant's house, and knew him to be an attendant on the rich English family, whose approaching excursion up the Nile was already the theme of general conversation. The place where they met happening to be immediately in front of a coffee-

shop, Demetri proposed that they should rest for a few minutes, and take a cup of coffee. While they were thus occupied—Demetri's two companions listening to his flowery description of the wonders of Upper Egypt—a Moghrebi,* of gigantic and herculean proportions, who had probably been indulging in a forbidden drink more stimulating than coffee, came up, and his fanaticism being roused at the sight of Mr. Foyster's dress, he cried out to him, in an angry voice—

‘Get up, Christian dog, and give me your seat.’

The valet, not understanding a word, looked at Demetri for an explanation. The latter, much alarmed, and evidently not desirous of exhibiting any feat of valour similar to those of which he had often boasted, said to the Moghrebi—

‘He is a stranger, and does not understand your speech.’

‘Does he not?’ replied the other; ‘then perhaps he will understand this,’ and so saying he kicked the seat from under Mr. Foyster with such force that the latter fell backwards on the ground.

* The Arabs of the north-western shores of Africa are termed ‘Moghrebin,’ from the word ‘Moghreb,’ ‘the place of the setting sun.’ Most of the pehlivans or wrestlers seen in Egypt are Moghrebin.

While this was being enacted, Demetri whispered to Hassan—

‘Let us make haste to get away from this place. That is the noted Pehlivan.* He carries four men on his shoulders ; he is an elephant.’

Mr. Foyster was not, in the common sense of the word, a coward—that is, in a dispute with a man of his own size he would have risked getting a black eye rather than patiently take a drubbing; but his courage was not of the heroic cast which sets aside all calculation of chances, and a glance at the Moghrebi showed him that he might as well think of measuring his strength with the champion of the English ring.

‘Why do you insult the stranger, and kick his seat from him?’ said Hassan to the Moghrebi. ‘He offered you no offence.’

‘Offence!’ replied the Moghrebi, scornfully, ‘his presence is an offence. Is he not a dog of an infidel?’

‘There is no God but Allah, and Mahomet is his prophet,’ said Hassan. ‘Those who are ignorant of the truth are to be pitied ; but our lord (Mohammed Ali) has made friends with these Franks. They buy and sell here in peace ; and

* Pehlivan is the name common in Turkey, Arabia, and Persia for a ‘wrestler,’ or ‘athlete.’

it is not right to strike or insult them without cause in our streets.'

'And who are you, youngster, who dare to preach to me?' said the athlete, contemptuously. 'Are you perhaps a Sheik, or a Mollah, or a Kâdi?'

'I am a man, and I fear not a wise one, for wasting my words upon an ox without understanding,' replied Hassan, his eyes kindling with anger.

'You are a bastard (Ebn-Haram),' shouted the athlete; 'and if you had half a beard I would spit upon it.'

The reader may recollect, in the first chapter, that it was this abusive epithet (accidentally resembling the name given to him in his childhood), which had been the original cause of his leaving his desert home. Hearing it now applied to him before a score of spectators, his fury was no longer to be controlled. Springing upon the Moghrebi with the bound of a tiger, he seized him by the throat, and a fearful struggle ensued.

Although the athlete was the heavier and more bulky man, it soon appeared that Hassan was his equal in strength, and far his superior in activity. After a contest of some minutes, in which each displayed a complete mastery of all the sleights of

wrestling, Hassan succeeded in passing his hand under the leg of his gigantic opponent, and lifting him fairly in his arms, dashed him with terrific force on the ground. Hassan stood for a moment looking on his fallen opponent, from whose mouth and nostrils flowed a stream of blood. The people from the coffee-shop now crowded round him : some threw water on his face, and in a short time he recovered sufficiently to raise himself up ; but he was in no condition to renew the struggle, and Hassan walked away with his two companions, followed by the ejaculations of the bystanders—‘ Mashallah ! wonderful ! ’—the greater part of them being rejoiced at the discomfiture of the athlete, who was indeed a notorious brawler and bully.

The same evening, when Mr. Foyster was in attendance on the Thorpe family assembled at supper, he was so full of the day’s adventure that he could not help muttering to himself half-audibly—‘ Wonderful ! wonderful ! ’—till Selden Thorpe, overhearing him, inquired what had happened to occasion these exclamations. This was all that Mr. Foyster required to let loose his tongue, for he piqued himself not a little on his powers of description.

‘ Why you see, sir,’ he said, ‘ Demetri and I

was coming home this afternoon, when we stopped at a coffee-shop to take a cup of coffee with a young man a friend of his—he's an Arab they say, but a very civil spoken lad, and, I will say, as 'ansome as a pictur.' (Dr. Moss gave a groan and Emily smiled.) 'Well, as we was a sipping our coffee, up comes a great burly fellow of herculaneum portions—'

'Herculean proportions,' interrupted Dr. Moss.

'Well, Doctor,' said Mr. Foyster, with some indignation, 'when a person is relating an antidote, a syllable more or less don't make so much difference. As I was a-sayin', this great big fellow comes up and says something to me—I don't know what, but Demetri tells me it warn't noways civil—and without waitin' for any answer, he kicks the seat from under me, so in course I fell on the ground. Demetri's young friend, whom he calls Hassan, asked him very purlitely what he does that for; and the big fellow gave him a saucy answer. Hassan, still quiet and civil, expostilated with him again; and, to say the truth, I thought as how he didn't much fancy quarrellin' with him, no more than I did, for he was a terrible strong fellow, and goes about the streets carrying six men on his shoulders. Then he abused young

Hassan dreadful, as Demetri told me, callin' his parents bad names, and telling him if he had a beard he would spit on it. Lord, sir, you should have seen that young savage's face when he heard them words—you know that Arabs is but savages after all—his two eyes shone like burning coals—he sprung upon the big fellow, who tried to throw him, but warn't no use at all—young Hassan raised him in his arms, and held him up just like that statute in master's library, of a man killing the learned hyder;' ('Hercules and the Lernæan hydra,' groaned Dr. Moss.) 'and then, sir, he dashed him on the ground, so that all his blood spurted out of his nose and mouth.'

'Was the man killed?' inquired Emily.

'No, Miss, not quite; but I'll be bound he'll show off no more of his strength nor bullying here: he's got his month's allowance, and that, too, from a youth scarce come to his full growth.'

'It must be the same lad,' said Selden, 'whom I saw talking to Demetri the last time that I went to Mr. ——'s to cash a bill—tall, with a dark complexion, and large black eyes.'

'That's him,' said Mr. Foyster; 'there's none like him in size and looks hereabouts, and Demetri says that everybody likes him as he's so good-

tempered, and never quarrels with nobody.' Here the conversation dropped, and the Thorpe family betook themselves to their usual avocations, Dr. Moss retiring to his own room to work at his Arabic grammar and vocabulary with renewed ardour.

The preparations of the Dahabiàh were now nearly completed. It had been found, however, that after all she was too small to accommodate all the party with comfort, so a second of a smaller size had been hired, on board of which slept the Doctor and Selden, and it was arranged that the two boats were always to keep close together, the cooking and meals being on board of the larger.

It was about this time that, after receiving a letter from Cairo, Hadji Ismael sent one morning for Hassan, and told him that a new commission had arrived, in the execution of which his assistance would be requisite.

'Upon my head and eyes be it,' said the youth.

'I have received a letter from my friend Ali Pasha, commonly called Delì Pasha;* he tells me that our lord, Ibrahim Pasha, saw the horses

* Deli signifies 'mad' in the Turkish language, but it is frequently applied to those who have distinguished themselves in war by acts of daring courage.

which I sent to Constantinople two or three years ago, and was so much pleased with them that he gave great praise to his servant (me), saying that no horse commission had been so well executed as this. Our lord Ibrahim Pasha has now desired Delì Pasha to write to me and find out who purchased these horses for me, and if possible to send the person up to Cairo, where his services are much required. Now, Hassan, as you had the chief trouble and merit of that purchase, I propose to send you to Delì Pasha on this matter. It may open you a way to fortune.'

'You are my uncle,'* replied Hassan; 'and I am ready to go where you wish, and my fortune is in the hand of Allah.'

'Nay, my son,' said the good merchant; 'it is bitter to my heart to part with you, but you know that it is not consistent with the circumstances of your birth and early youth that you should remain always in this town; do you not wish to go to Cairo? Perhaps, by the blessing of Allah, you may learn things there which concern your happiness?'

Hassan saw at once that his fosterfather had communicated to the Hadji some of the mysterious

* The word 'Uncle' is frequently used in Arabic as a term of respectful affection.

circumstances attending his early childhood, so he replied—

‘It is true that I have a weight on my heart, and if I could remove it by a journey to Cairo, it would be a blessed journey indeed.’

‘You would seek for a father; is it not so?’ said the Hadji.

‘It is so,’ replied Hassan. ‘I have made search and inquiry in Alexandria without success; but I am sure I shall find him, for I have taken a ‘fal’ in the Khoran,* and the words that I found were, ‘The faithful who seek shall not be disappointed in their hope.’’

‘Inshallah! your hope will be fulfilled!’ replied the merchant. ‘Have you anything with you, by which a parent, if found, could recognise you?’

Hassan undid his long girdle, and from its inmost folds produced the relics given him by his

* Taking a Fal, or an omen, is a very common practice all over the East among persons who are in doubt as to the advisableness of any scheme or project which they wish to undertake; it is done in various ways, sometimes with beads, sometimes with books; but in matters of a serious nature the Koran is usually resorted to. The person wishing to consult the oracle takes up the sacred book, and after putting it reverently to his forehead, opens it at random, and reads the first passage that meets his eyes; if the text is favourable, or can be construed favourably to his project, he follows it out with confidence of success.

fostermother. The merchant examined them attentively.

‘These would be sufficient,’ he said, ‘to identify you ; but, Hassan, if you go to Cairo, remember that there are many accidents by water and by land ; you might be robbed, and could never replace them. You had better leave some of them with me ; I will keep them for you in my iron chest ; whenever you require them, you can send for them.’

Hassan cheerfully acquiesced in the proposal of his kind patron, and reserving only the quaintly-devised amulet, he gave up the remainder, receiving from the merchant a paper describing them accurately, and bearing the merchant’s seal.

The worthy Hadji was indeed grieved to part with his protégé, for whom he entertained an affection almost paternal ; but having resolved to do so, for the youth’s own advantage, his chief anxiety now was to secure that, and to furnish him well for the journey. For this purpose he desired Mohammed Aga to procure a pair of stout saddlebags, into which he put two complete suits of clothes, and also two small Cashmere shawls ; with respect to these last the Hadji whispered—‘You need not wear these unless you find a father in some great man, but they may be useful to you as

presents.' He also presented him with a sword of excellent temper, a slight but beautifully worked Persian dagger, and a pair of English pistols ; to these he added a well-filled purse ; but observing some hesitation in Hassan's countenance, the kind-hearted Hadji added with a smile—' Nay, it is almost all due to you for past services ; but I shall write to Delì Pasha and inform him that your salary is prepaid for three months from this date.' Hassan kissed the hand of his benefactor, his heart was too full for speech, and he could only utter—

' If I find a father, may he be like Hadji Ismael.'

Of personal vanity Hassan was as free as from the foibles which usually attend it ; but it cannot be denied that when he walked out in the full dress and equipment proper to a young Bedouin Sheik, he walked with a prouder step, and the day-dreams which he had nourished concerning his future destiny took a firmer hold of his imagination.

' Whither bound, my brother ?' called out to him Demetri, on meeting him near the door of the merchant's house. ' Mashallah ! you have the air and costume of a bridegroom ! Who is the moon-faced one whom you have chosen ? By our

head, Hassan, it is not well to keep these things secret from your friends. When is the wedding to take place?’

‘Nay, there is no wedding in the case,’ said Hassan, laughing. ‘The Hadji is going to send me on a commission to Cairo, and he has given me this dress and these arms.’

‘May Allah reward him,’ said the merry Greek. ‘To Cairo, said you? Why, the Fates are propitious. We are going there likewise. Inshallah, we will go together.’

‘How may that be?’ demanded Hassan. ‘You are going with that rich Frank family, and I hear that your boat will be so crowded with luggage and people, that there will not be room for a sparrow on board.’

‘Nonsense,’ replied the Greek. ‘There is always room for a friend. The English servant and I can do as we please, for the old Englishman troubles himself about nothing, so long as he has his books, and a few old bricks and tiles to look at.’

‘Bricks and tiles!’ said Hassan. ‘Why, is he going to build a house in Upper Egypt?’

‘No; but by my father’s head, he is mad about old bricks. The other day he made me go with him all round the mounds near Pompey’s Pillar,

and he brought back with him nearly an ass-load of fragments of stone, bricks, and pottery.'

'Wonderful!' said Hassan. 'But why do you think the English servant would be willing to give me a passage in the boat?'

'Why,' replied Demetri; 'because ever since the day that you threw down the Moghrebi bully who had kicked his seat from under him, he does nothing but talk of you. Never fear; he will be delighted to have your company; and we will tell the old gentleman that if we have you on board, all the thieves and robbers within twenty miles of the bank will disappear as by magic.'

'Nay,' said Hassan, laughing; 'do not tell him anything that might lead him to think me a boasting fool. But you certainly may tell him that, if he gives me a passage, and any danger or trouble occurs, I shall be ready to tender the best service in my power.'

On this they parted, and Demetri, who never permitted the grass to grow on any plan that he had in his head, communicated it the same day to Mr. Foyster, who relished it extremely, being well satisfied to have by him in case of need a stouter heart and arm than that with which Providence had blessed the Greek interpreter. Accordingly, they proceeded together to Mr. Thorpe, and ex-

plained to him the advantages to be derived from the proposed addition to their party.

‘But,’ said Mr. Thorpe, ‘I fear we have no cabin vacant.’

‘Cabin!’ echoed Demetri. ‘Does your excellency think that a son of the desert like him would go into a cabin? No, no. With his bornoos (cloak) over him, and his khordj (saddlebags) under his head, he will sleep like a prince on any part of the deck.’

Mr. Thorpe having no other objection to make, and the ladies being curious to see the hero of Mr. Foyster’s narrative, no further persuasion was requisite, and Hadji Ismael, on his part, was heartily glad that his young protégé had found so convenient and easy a conveyance to Cairo.

It was with sincere and mutual regret that Hassan parted with Mohammed Aga and his son Ahmed, who had shown him such invariable kindness during the three or four years that he had spent in Alexandria. But ‘destiny had written it,’ and it is wonderful to see the composure with which good Mussulmen resign themselves even to the heaviest misfortunes with that phrase on their tongue.

The chief clerk, in bidding adieu to Hassan, put a letter into his hand. ‘Take this, my son,’

he said. 'It is addressed to Ahmed Aga, the Mirakhor,* and favourite Mameluke of Delì Pasha. I have known him long, and I trust he will be a good friend to you.'

It may truly be said that Hassan in quitting the merchant's house left universal regret behind him. Even the old Berber bowàb (porter) said, 'Allah preserve him. He was a good youth. Every Bairam he gave me a dollar, and if I was half asleep and kept him at the door, he never cursed my father.'

* Mirakhor, a Persian word commonly used throughout Turkey, meaning 'master of the horse.'

CHAPTER VII.

IN GOING UP THE MAHMOUDIAH CANAL AN INCIDENT OCCURS WHICH ENDS IN HASSAN'S GETTING A WOUND, AND EMILY THORPE WRITING A LETTER.

IT was a fine autumnal day, about the middle of October, that the Thorpe party embarked on the dahabiâhs destined to convey them on their Nile expedition. The boats were moored to the banks of the Mahmoudiah canal, just opposite the pleasant and shady garden then occupied by Moharrem Bey, a relation of the Viceroy's by marriage.

The commissariat department was, for the day, divided in its charge—Mr. Foyster despatching the packages from town, and Demetri superintending their delivery and stowage on board. As donkey followed donkey, and porter followed porter to the place of embarkation, the active Greek distributed the packages in their several places; but the space and his patience were well nigh exhausted by their variety and multitude. There were Mr. Thorpe's clothes and books, and measuring instruments; and a box of tools for excavation; and heaven knows what beside. Then

there were young Mr. T.'s guns and ammunition; the Doctor's books; Mrs. T.'s dresses and bonnets; Miss T.'s ditto, with drawing-books and a guitar—these, and other sundries, the greater part of which Demetri considered as useless, were all to be added to the well-filled boxes and hampers of wine, spirits, tea, sugar, preserves, pickles, and a thousand other things, with which his assiduity and Mr. Thorpe's guineas had filled every available bunker and corner of the boats.

Hassan had gone down early to the place of embarkation, not knowing exactly the hour at which the start was to take place; so Demetri availed himself of this circumstance to make him instantan his lieutenant, in urging the porters and the sailors to hasten the stowage of the multifarious baggage.

‘By your head, Hassan, you are welcome!’ cried the busy Greek; ‘had you not come, we should not have finished this work to-day, for these fellows are asses and the sons and grandsons of asses. Here—here, you blind dog!’ shouted he to a sturdy fellow who was carrying a hamper into the smaller dahabiàh, ‘did I not tell you to put that in the large boat?’

Here he paused; and wiping the perspiration

from his forehead, said in an undertone to Hassan—

‘Mr. Foyster and I keep the wine-store in this boat to have it under our own eye. The tutor and the young gentleman are in the small boat, and they cannot require wine.’

‘If they are to study,’ replied Hassan, smiling, ‘I doubt not that Nile water would be better for them; but you should know better than I, who am not a student or a drinker of wine.’

‘That is the only fault you have, my lad,’ said Demetri; ‘there is nothing like wine to open the heart and brighten the eye. Oh! you pig,’ shouted he to another burly fellow going towards the cabin door; ‘are you going to carry that kafass full of fowls into the ladies’ sleeping cabin?’ So saying, he jumped upon the luckless porter, and with a few smart blows of his courbatch sent him forward with his chicken-load.

With the assistance of Hassan, Demetri contrived to get the multifarious boxes into something like order and arrangement by the time that a cloud of dust, and the braying of half-a-dozen donkeys announced the approach of the Thorpe party, led by paterfamilias and his lady—the rear being brought up by Mr. Foyster and Mary Powell, who carried in her lap ‘Flora’—Miss Emily’s pet

spaniel ; which last, if allowed to run, would have been soon devoured by the packs of snarling and yelping dogs that lined the road from the town to the banks of the canal.

Once fairly embarked, the remainder of the day was spent in what travellers call in homely phrase—‘shaking down into their places ;’ as the boats, sometimes under easy sail, sometimes tracked from the shore, wound their slow way along the waters of the Mahmoudiah.

The voyage from Alexandria to Atfeh, the point at which the canal joins the Nile, is of itself so dull, and is, moreover, so familiar, either by experience or description, to the world in general, that it scarcely merits a separate notice. Nevertheless, as it may not be uninteresting to see the impression which it produced upon a mind to which the scenery and the incidents of Egyptian travel are altogether new, we will commit the indiscretion of looking over Emily Thorpe’s shoulder, and transcribing, for the benefit of our readers, a letter which she wrote at Atfeh to her school-mate and bosom friend, Henrietta Clayton, who was passing the winter with her parents in Malta.

' Atfeh, Oct. 182—.

' MY DEAREST HENRIETTA,—Would that you were now beside me, to share, and thus to enhance, the enjoyments of this delightful country, where the sky, the air, the vegetation, the people, seem all of another world; the only old acquaintances that meet your eye being the sparrows and the crows—they indeed twitter and caw as they do elsewhere; but even the donkeys here differ as much from their brethren in England as an Arab does from a Yorkshire ploughman; perhaps you have a better experience of that animal in Malta, but my recollection of the creature in England is always coupled with the idea of two panniers of cabbages, or wretched, lazy, wearied animals, such as abound on our commons and at watering-places; whereas the Egyptian donkey seems to me a worthy comrade of the Arab horse. It was my delight to ride on one in Alexandria, which was brought to me by a bare-footed urchin scarcely twelve years old. Selden accompanied me—rather against his will, for he considers donkey-riding a bore—and I scampered all round the town, neither the donkey nor the unshod driver showing the slightest symptom of a desire to rest: indeed, if the former had done so, it would have been of no avail, for the urchin

was close behind my saddle, calling to him, and panting and grinning as if he enjoyed the fun as much as I did ! However, as I wrote to you from Alexandria, I will now proceed to give you a sketch of our voyage up the canal to this place.

‘ Henrietta dear, did you ever see a drawing of a Nile-boat called a dahabiàh ? It is a marvellous specimen of ship-building, and has, I believe, undergone but little change since the days of Cleopatra. Our largest (for we have two) is about ninety feet long, and sixteen or seventeen broad ; one half of the whole length is occupied by our cabins, which are six feet high, and very cosy. Mamma has the one next to the stern ; mine adjoins hers on one side and Mary Powell’s on the other. Then papa has a little place where he sleeps, and which he calls his den ; and a proper den it is, for when he is once in it with his books and his boxes about him, he can scarcely turn round : but his head is so full of the pyramids that he thinks and dreams of nothing else. The front or outer cabin is our dining and drawing room : it is a magnificent apartment, fourteen feet by eight, with cupboards in the corners, and under all the sofas, where Foyster keeps his mysterious treasures. (Do you know, Henrietta, I begin to

think he is a great rogue, though perhaps not so great as our dragoman Demetri; they both 'font les yeux doux' at Mary, but she does not appear to be much smitten with either.)

'Well, to continue with our boat. In front of the cabins is the deck, all of which takes to pieces in compartments, to allow the men to sit at the oars, which are fourteen in number; but these last are only used in coming down the river. Very near the prow of the boat is the mast, leaning forward, as if about to tumble over, and attached to it by a yard of enormous length is the huge triangular sail, whose upper corner you can see over miles and miles of this flat country, bearing in the distance the appearance of a seagull's wing.

'I forgot to mention that above our cabins is a kind of upper deck, on which we have spread some mattresses and cushions covered with chintz. This is my favourite place for sitting to sketch and read; but mamma rarely goes up there, as you require to mount by a small flight of wooden steps from the lower deck, an ascent which, in her opinion, does not repay the trouble. Immediately behind my sketching-place, and separated from it by a low rail, is the little quarterdeck appropriated to the pilot and the captain. The latter is a venerable-looking man, with a white beard. Here

he is called the Rais. From this elevation he shouts his orders to the crew, and I observe that they all bawl and shout together, and rarely do anything they are told without a dispute.

‘ Hassan seems to be on the most friendly terms with the rais, and is usually either talking with him or reading beside him. But I forgot, Henrietta, you do not know who Hassan is, and I must duly introduce you, for indeed he is the hero of the only adventure we have yet met with. He is a young man of singularly prepossessing appearance, over whose birth, our dragoman tells me, there ‘hangs a tale of mystery.’ No one knows his parentage; but he was brought up by a Bedouin chief as his son, and was called the ‘ Child of the Pyramid.’ They say that as a horseman he is unequalled, and although he is only twenty years of age, his strength, and activity, and courage are the subject of many tales, one of which you will find in this letter, if I ever get to the end of it.

‘ I will not inflict upon you any detailed account of Hassan’s personal appearance, but will ask you, Henrietta, whether you remember when we were girls our reading fairy tales of unfortunate damsels carried off by ogres or giants, and wishing that we might be in such a plight just for the pleasure of seeing some gentle knight come up with the

speed of lightning, kill the ogre, and, kneeling, ask us whither he might have the honour to conduct us.

‘I will own that I have now lost my imaginary taste for riding *en croupe* behind an ogre on a dragon; but if I were in such a predicament, I scarcely know one to whom I would rather trust my chance of deliverance than to this same Hassan, who, although he may have the fierceness of a savage when excited, has habitually the modest and gentle demeanour of one of nature’s nobility.

‘But to return to our voyage in the dahabiàh. I was surprised to find that this Mahmoudiah canal, although cut by the present Viceroy at an enormous cost of money and of human life, through a country perfectly flat, is as winding in its course as a path through a labyrinth. On asking Demetri, our dragoman, if he could explain the cause of this, he answered me by a story—for he has a story ready for almost every occasion. The very same question, he says, was lately put to Mohammed Ali by a French engineer travelling through Egypt. The Pasha, after a moment’s reflection, said to the engineer—

‘‘Have you ever seen rivers in Europe?’’

‘‘Yes, sir, many,’’ was the reply.

‘‘ Are they straight or crooked in their course ?’

‘‘ They are generally crooked, sir.’

‘‘ Who made the rivers ?’ inquired the Pasha.

‘‘ They were made by Allah,’ said the astonished engineer.

‘‘ Then, sir,’ concluded the Pasha, triumphantly; ‘ do you expect me to know and to do better than Allah ?’

‘ The poor engineer had no reply to make to this strange argument, so he took his leave, and went his way.

‘ I hope we shall soon see this extraordinary man, who has raised himself from the position of a subaltern to the Viceroyalty of Egypt. They say that he is now staying at a small country-house that he has built on the banks of the Nile, about fifty miles above this place.

‘ On the first day we had mostly contrary winds, and the tracking a boat of this size is slower than a snail’s gallop. Hassan having seen some wild ducks flying over a marsh at no great distance, borrowed Selden’s gun, and went in search of them. In the evening he brought back five or six, which made an agreeable addition to our yesterday’s dinner. But yesterday, dear Henrietta, yesterday was our first adventure, I hope our last of that

kind, for I assure you I am scarcely yet recovered from the shock.

‘ We were sailing up the canal, the breeze being favourable, though very slight, when at a bend or sharp turn, we came suddenly upon a large boat like our own, coming from Atfeh to Alexandria. I was sitting, as usual, on the upper deck ; Mary was working near me ; papa and mamma were below, and Selden in the lighter boat had gone on a mile or two a-head of us. Whether owing to a sudden change of course, or to some mismanagement on the part of one of the pilots, I know not, but the two boats came together with a fearful crash. The rigging of both was damaged, and for some minutes the vessels were locked to each other near the prow, the men being unable to extricate them. It seemed that the crew of the other boat was far more numerous than ours, and, amongst others, I particularly noticed a man dressed in a military blue frock, who Demetri told me afterwards was a kawàss of the Viceroy.

‘ The noise, the yells that ensued, and the volumes of (to me unintelligible) abuse that were interchanged, baffle all description ; but as no one seemed to think of disengaging the vessels, but all were bent upon gesticulations which became every minute more hostile, I felt seriously alarmed,

and wished to retire below. Hassan, who had been sitting in his usual place behind our divan, seeing my alarm, came up to me and said with a smile (for he speaks English tolerably well)—

‘Do not be afraid, lady ; these fellahs make a great deal of noise, but there is no danger.’

‘Even as he was speaking, the man in the blue coat, who seemed to be in a perfect fury, and to be urging his men to board our boat and beat our crew, caught up a stone or brick, which happened to come within his reach. Whether he aimed it at Hassan, or the rais, or me, I know not, but it just grazed my head, tearing off the bonnet, and drawing a little blood from the upper part of my cheek. In the terror of the moment I called out, ‘Oh, Hassan!’ I was sorry for it afterwards, but indeed I was so frightened that I scarcely knew what I did.

‘As for Hassan, his countenance changed in a moment ; his eyes really shone like lightning ; it was terrible to see such concentrated fury in that young face, so gentle in its habitual expression. Calling the rais to hold up his large cloak before me to shield me from further harm, he sprang to the lower deck, and ran forward to the prow where the boat had been entangled. Before he reached

the spot they had become disengaged, I know not how, and ours was beginning slowly to resume its course; when clearing the intervening space at a bound, he leapt alone upon the deck of the other boat. There he was met and attacked by a man with what they call here a naboot, a thick heavy stick, something like an English quarter-staff. Hassan wrenched it from the man's grasp, and whirling it round his head, and calling on the others to stand back, he forced his way to the spot where stood the kawàss who had thrown the stone; the latter drew his sword, but Hassan's blow fell with such terrific force that the sword was shattered, and the man fell senseless on the deck.

' We could see that four or five of the boat's crew struck at Hassan and grappled with him, endeavouring to throw him down and bind him, but he shook them off by the exertion of his tremendous strength, and plunging overboard into the canal swam to the opposite bank; two of the boat's crew jumped in and swam after him, but he reached the shore before them. Indeed my belief is that they were not very anxious to catch him. He then ran along the bank till he overtook our boat, which was now going steadily through the water with a fair wind, and plunging

into the canal again, caught a rope thrown to him by our rais, and in a minute was safely on board.

‘ All this passed, dear Henrietta, in less time than it has taken me to describe it, and I need not tell you in what a state of anxiety and agitation I was while looking at him struggling alone with those wretches who were striking at him with any weapon that came to hand. It appears, indeed, that he received several severe bruises on the arms, and a stab in the shoulder from a knife. When he was safe on board I looked round at Mary, and saw that her eyes were filled with tears. Were my own dry, Henrietta? perhaps not; for I felt vexed with myself for having uttered the exclamation which had involved him in such a risk of his life. As for Hassan, all his anger seemed to have vanished with the incident which occasioned it; having retired to some indescribable corner behind a heap of boxes and hampers piled near the rudder, he changed his clothes, and the old rais bandaged the wound in his shoulder, which, he said, was nothing. Mary had in the meantime washed the scratch on my cheek, and put on it a slip of that invaluable vade-mecum called court-plaster. Thus, in half an hour, we had resumed our respective

positions, and Hassan was employed in drying and oiling his sword and pistols.

‘I tried to thank him for the zeal he had shown in my cause, but I fear I made a sad bungle of it, for I rather scolded him for going alone to attack a man defended by so many on board his own boat.

‘Were there so many, lady?’ he said, with the utmost simplicity; ‘I did not see them; I only saw that cowardly fellow who threw the brick and struck you on the head; the truth is, I only wanted to punish him, and having done that, I did not care about hurting the others.’

‘But they hurt you, and might have killed you,’ I replied; ‘you see, as it is, they have given you some bruises, and a stab with a knife.’

‘They did only their duty,’ said Hassan, carelessly; ‘I suppose they were defending their master. As for the stab, Inshallah, it will be well in three days; it is not worth speaking about.’ So saying, he resumed his pistol-cleaning with renewed assiduity, and I went below to tell papa and mamma the events of which I had been a spectator, and of which they, being shut up in the cabin, and even locked in by Demetri’s over-carefulness, had known nothing excepting from the noise accompanying the incident.

‘And now, my dearest Henrietta, as I have nothing else of interest to relate previous to our reaching this place, Atfeh, and as I hope to write again from Cairo, I will close this voluminous letter, assuring you that I am now and always your affectionate

‘EMILY THORPE.’

CHAPTER VIII.

THE THORPE PARTY CONTINUE THEIR COURSE UP THE
NILE—ARAB BOAT-SONG—THEY ARRIVE AT MOHAMMED
ALI'S VILLA ON THE BANKS OF THE RIVER.

THE two dahabiàhs had passed through the locks of Atfeh, and were just about to commence their course up the broad stream of the Nile, when a kawàss from the Governor of the town came to the water's edge, and desired the rais of the larger boat to stay a few minutes, as he had a message to deliver to the English traveller.

On being presented to Mr. Thorpe, at whose side stood Demetri as interpreter, the kawàss said he was instructed by the Governor to desire that an Arab on board, charged with assaulting and beating one of the servants of the Viceroy, might be given up to him.

Mr. Thorpe, whose experience of Eastern travel was small, but who was at the same time too humane to think of giving up Hassan to the tender mercies of the Atfeh authorities, consulted apart with Demetri, and then replied—

‘Tell the Governor that I have a complaint to

make against the captain and crew of the boat which ran into and damaged mine; and also against that servant of the Viceroy who, without any right or provocation, threw a brick at my daughter, which struck her, and might have killed her. I am now on my way to Cairo, where the rights of the case will be examined by the English Consul and the Egyptian Government: then if any person in this boat shall be judged to be in fault he can be punished.'

The kawàss, not having any reply ready to meet this reasonable proposal, permitted the boats to proceed on their way, and retired to deliver the message to his principal.

Behold them now fairly embarked on the broad waters of that time-honoured river, which, from the day when the infant Moses slept in a basket on its banks until yesterday, has been a constant theme of interest to the antiquarian, the geographer, the historian, and the traveller! Unlike the Rhine, the Rhone, and other great rivers in Europe, which are, as it were, merely beneficial accidents in the countries through which they flow, the Nile is the creator and perpetuator, as well as the fertilizer, of the whole soil of Egypt. Wherever its prolific waters annually irrigate and subside, there spring up in exuberant abundance the

grains and herbs of the field, the flowers and fruits of the garden, the almond and pomegranate, the fruitful palm, the fragrant orange and lemon, the cotton-plant and the sugar-cane, and more frequent than all, the wide-spread shade of the sycamore.* In Egypt, it is unnecessary to inquire where vegetation ceases and the desert begins: from the cataracts to the Mediterranean the answer would be always the same—whatever spot or line the waters of the Nile can reach there is, or may be, cultivation; all beyond that line is desert.

The feelings of our party on attaining the first view of this glorious river were various as their habits and characters. Mr. Thorpe walked up and down the deck of his boat, with Emily by his side. They interchanged but few words, for the thoughts of both were busy within them. He revered the ancient associations of the scene; he remembered that on these same waters had floated the barks which bore the countless warriors of Sesostris, and that every mile was now bringing him nearer to his beloved pyramids, and to hundred-gated Thebes.

Emily's reverie—in which Moses and the daughter of Pharaoh, Saladin, and the Mameluke

* Not the tree commonly called sycamore in England, but the 'wild fig-tree.'

chivalry overthrown by Napoleon, all bore their part—was of a more vague, yet not less pleasing kind. Selden, who had just thrown overboard the end of a half-smoked cigar, was listening, with ill-dissembled impatience, to a lecture delivered by Dr. Hieronymus Moss, who, with an open Herodotus before him, said to his pupil—

‘Now, Selden, that we are fairly embarked on this classic stream, let us read together the description of Egypt given by the Father of History. It will be impressed on your mind by the surrounding scenery; you will feel the genius loci, on occasions like these, as Horace says—*Præsentionem conspicimus Deum.*’

‘I beg your pardon, Doctor,’ interrupted Selden, with a mischievous curl of his lip; ‘I thought I had seen that verse in my copy of Gray’s Poems.’

‘Ha! indeed!’ stammered the Doctor, somewhat confused; ‘it is possible; I have so many classical quotations in my head, that I may sometimes mistake the source whence they are derived.’

‘True, Doctor,’ replied his pupil, ‘such mistakes will happen, even to the most learned men,—*‘aliquando bonus dormitat Homerus.’*’

While this dialogue was going forward, Mrs.

Thorpe was declaring that she thought the banks very dull and the Nile water very dirty, while Mary Powell observed to Mr. Foyster—

‘Why, the Thames at Richmond is only a puddle to this.’ To which Mr. Foyster, who was always ready to enlighten her ignorance, replied—

‘Miss Mary, this ’ere river is big enough as you say, but it aint noways judgmatical to measure things by their size, otherwise Miss Emily might prefer an ox to that pretty little long-eared Flora as is now on your knee. Them as knows what’s what, always looks into the natur of things. Look at the boats and barges, and wherries on the Thames, and the lovely villas with populars and weepin’ willows on its banks; the rowing-matches and the pleasurin’-parties up to Eel-pie Island; then below-bridge, the docks full of ships, and the cellars full of sherry, and the whitebait at Blackwall; that *is* a river if you like.’

Poor Mary still thought that there was something more worthy of admiration in the vast expanse and majestic course of the Nile than in the crowded and confused objects enumerated by Mr. Foyster, but as she did not pretend to ‘know what’s what,’ and was not sure that she could explain it if she did, she thought it more prudent

not to provoke further discussion with the eloquent and authoritative butler.

The evening drew slowly on, and Emily had persuaded her father to go up to her favourite divan on the upper deck, where he sat beside her with his open Champollion on his knee, while she made a rough sketch of an Arab village on the bank, with a tuft of palm-trees behind it, giving it a picturesque beauty which a nearer inspection would, alas ! have totally dispelled.

Hassan reclined in his usual place near the rais, reading snatches of his Arabian Nights, and occasionally casting his eyes over the desert sand-hills to the west, endeavouring to recognise among them some spot which he had passed in his expeditions with the Oulâd-Ali. The boats glided swiftly forward through the turbid stream under the impulse of a fair and fresh breeze, their crews seated lazily round the mast, passing their pipe from mouth to mouth, when Demetri, to whom everything like silence or quiet was naturally repugnant, came aft and asked Mr. Thorpe whether he would like to hear the crew sing an Arab boat-song.

Emily's reply, ' Oh ! papa, let us hear it by all means ! ' anticipated and ensured the old gentleman's consent, which was no sooner obtained

than the crew all came aft, and sate down in a circle on the deck just in front of the cabin.

Demetri acted as leader, and beat the time with a cane in his hand, which he every now and then allowed to descend pretty sharply on the shoulders of any luckless wight who did not open his jaws and his throat to the utmost extent at the recurrence of the burden or chorus which terminated every verse.

The orchestra consisted of a miserable apology for a kettle-drum (called in Egypt a darabooka) played by a fellow who swayed his head and shoulders backwards and forwards to the time of the song.

When the songster began his lay, Emily Thorpe nearly jumped on her feet, she was so taken by surprise at the sound that he screwed rather than drew out of his labouring windpipe. The tone was so strange and its vibrations so shrill as the fellow half shut one eye and threw up his head sideways to strain his voice to the utmost pitch, that Emily was fain to put up her handkerchief to her face, partly to hide the laugh which she could not resist, and partly to shield her ears from the dissonant shrillness of the sound. When, however, he came down from these indescribable

counter-tenor heights* to a more natural tone, and Emily was able to follow the cadence of the song, especially of the wild and irregular chorus which terminated every verse, she began to find it more tolerable, and afterwards even pleasing in its effect.

Hassan being called upon by Mr. Thorpe to explain the words, and finding the same demand repeated from Emily's blue eyes, felt not a little confused ; for independently of the fact that his knowledge of English was imperfect, it is certain that these songs of the Nile boatmen are extremely difficult to translate, sometimes from the elliptical vagueness of their language, sometimes from its plain and unveiled indecency ; he succeeded, however, in giving the general meaning of the song, which cast roughly into English rhyme would run as follows :—

‘ O night ! O night ! O night ! you’re better far than day ;
O night ! O night ! O night ! the Eastern sky is grey ;
O night ! O night ! O night ! a little longer stay ;
To the girls of Damanhour speed on our homeward way.

* The reader may perhaps not have heard, or may have forgotten, a reply attributed to Dr. Johnson, who being once present at a concert where an Italian singer was executing some bravura ornaments at, if not beyond, the highest notes of her voice, his neighbour observed to him, ‘ How wonderful are those trills ;’ ‘ Would to Heaven they were impossible,’ was the Doctor’s surly answer.

CHORUS.

The girls of Damanhour, like young gazelles at play,
The girls of Damanhour, none half so fair as they.

'O night! O night! O night! my love is far away,
O night! O night! O night! her form's a willow spray;*
O night! O night! O night! my heart is fallen a prey,
To Damanhour eyes, like those of fawn at play.

CHORUS.

Oh the girls of Damanhour, like young gazelles at play;
The girls of Damanhour, none half so fair as they.'

'Are the ladies of Damanhour so fair as they are described?' inquired Emily.

'I know not,' replied Hassan, smiling, 'for I was never there excepting once or twice, and then only for a day or two; but I doubt their beauty, lady, for what are they but fellahs? Doubtless the song was written by some Damanhour rhymer, and we have a proverb in Arabic—'My children are fairer than yours,' said the crow to the parrot.'

'Do you despise the fellahs, Hassan?' said Mr. Thorpe.

'Despise them! No,' replied the youth (his countenance betraying the pride which his tongue

* It is a very common image in the popular songs of Egypt, and also in more classic Arabic poetry, to liken a graceful youthful figure in either sex to a spray or wand of the 'Bân,' or Egyptian willow.

disavowed); 'Allah made them, and they are good to cultivate the ground—nothing more. The ox and the donkey are useful animals, but neither is an Arab horse.'

'Strange are the prejudices of these children of the desert,' said Mr. Thorpe to his daughter as they entered the cabin, previous to retiring to rest. 'Their own life is one of rapine, wandering, and plunder, and yet you see how they despise those who follow the pursuits of agriculture and enjoy the comforts of a settled home.'

'Strange, indeed, papa,' said Emily, wishing him good night, and 'strange, indeed,' muttered she again to herself, as she shut the door of her own little cabin, and her conscience told her that she, a woman, and brought up in civilized society, would prefer the life of the roving Bedouin to that of the settled and industrious fellah.

On the following day the dahabiâhs continued their course up the Nile without accident or adventure, when, as they reached a bend in the river called Zaurât-el-Bahr, the party assembled on their decks saw before them at the distance of a few miles a number of tents, horsemen, and other indications of a large encampment.

On interrogating the rais, Mr. Thorpe learnt that from these indications the presence of Mo-

hammed Ali in person might certainly be inferred, he having built near that spot a small country-house, to which he occasionally resorted while inspecting the canals and other improvements which he had recently ordered to be made in the province of Menoufiah.

As the dahabiàhs drew near the encampment, and Mr. Thorpe was doubting whether he could, without a breach of decorum, gratify the curiosity he had long felt to see the celebrated founder of the new Egyptian dynasty, a six-oared boat, with an officer in the stern-sheets, darted out from the bank, and was alongside in a moment. Stepping on deck with a polite salute, he said he believed that he had the pleasure of seeing the English lord who had lately come up from Alexandria on his way to Cairo.*

Demetri having been desired to reply in the affirmative, the officer continued—

‘The Viceroy has heard of your coming, and orders me to say that he hopes you will not find it inconvenient to remain here to-night, and to breakfast with his Highness to-morrow morning, with all your party.’

* In those days all Englishmen travelling in Europe, as well as in Egypt, who spent their money more freely than the average of travellers, were termed ‘Lords.’

Mr. Thorpe having desired Demetri to accept the invitation on his part with due acknowledgments of the Viceroy's courtesy, the Greek made a most flowery speech upon the occasion, the half of which, at least, was of his own invention. It conveyed, however, the required acceptance; and the officer having withdrawn, the boats were made fast to the shore, a few hundred yards from the garden attached to the Viceroy's villa. Guards were sent down to protect them from thieves during the night, and half a dozen sheep, fifty fowls, and several baskets of fruit were sent on board by his Highness's order.

Mr. Thorpe and all his party were pleasantly surprised at the agreeable opportunity thus offered by the Viceroy's unexpected courtesy of seeing one whom they justly considered as a celebrity of his time. Emily Thorpe, though certainly not the least curious of the party, expressed some doubt whether the invitation extended to the ladies, frankly stating to her papa that such a proceeding seemed contrary to what she had read of Turkish etiquette. Mr. Thorpe, though believing that the Viceroy's invitation had been specially intended to include the ladies, sent Demetri on shore, desiring him to ascertain the point from one of the chamberlains. While they were dis-

cussing the probable inconveniences and difficulties of the morrow's breakfast, such as sitting on the ground and tearing up tough, greasy fowls with their fingers, Demetri returned with a message that, as Mr. Thorpe was accompanied by his wife and daughter, the Viceroy hoped to be honoured by their presence at breakfast ; and the question being thus definitively settled, they retired to rest.

On the following morning, at the appointed hour, an officer and several servants of the Viceroy's household came down to the boats to conduct the party to his Highness's presence, Demetri accompanying them in his capacity of dragoman. Mrs. Thorpe and Emily had not omitted to follow the advice given them by the British Consul in Alexandria, and on landing from their boat they each wore a thick green veil over their face. The precaution was not unnecessary, for they had to pass through a great crowd of soldiers, Mamelukes, and attendants, all of whom stared with eager curiosity at the Frank ladies, whose dress and appearance presented a greater novelty to Egyptian eyes than in these later days, when the Indian transit, steamboats and railroad, have rendered the European costume familiar to all and sundry.

On reaching the villa, after passing through an antechamber, at the door of which were two sentries with musket and bayonet, they came to a silk curtain fringed with gold. The conductor raised it, and they found themselves in the presence of Mohammed Ali. A man so remarkable deserves a chapter to himself, and it shall not be denied him.

CHAPTER IX.

THE THORPES' INTERVIEW WITH MOHAMMED ALI.

AT the period of our tale, Mohammed Ali was at the high tide of his personal and political career. Though upwards of fifty-five years—the latter half of them spent in constant warfare or intrigue—had passed over his head, they had not impaired either the energy of his mind or the activity of his frame.

All opposition to his government had been subdued: the scattered remnants of the Mameluke Beys whom he had overthrown were fugitives in remote parts of the Soudan. The Divan at Constantinople had found itself compelled to treat him rather like an independent ally than a powerful vassal. Nubia, and the countries fertilized by the White and the Blue Nile, had submitted to his arms. He had restored the Holy Cities, Mecca and Medina, to the dominion of the Sultan, and had brought under subjection the warlike and independent tribes of Arabia—the sands of whose desert fastnesses had never before been trodden by the foot of a foreign invader. Even the dreaded Wahabees, the terror of whose fanatic arms ex-

tended across the Arabian peninsula from the Red Sea to the Persian Gulf, had been unable to oppose any effectual resistance to his well-disciplined troops. Their great chief, Souhoud, had fallen. Deraiah, his capital, in the wild recesses of the Nejd, had been taken and plundered, and his son and successor, Abdallah, with all his family, had graced as captives the conqueror's triumph in Cairo.

After all these successes in foreign and domestic warfare, he turned his attention to the improvement and development of his acquired dominions; and in these pursuits evinced the same energy, if not always the same sagacity, that had marked his military career. His first object was to free the valley of the Nile from the depredations of the Bedouins on the bordering deserts; and having learnt from experience the difficulty, not to say the impossibility, of chastising the incursions of their flying squadrons with his regular troops, he adopted the plan of weakening them by division among themselves. With this view, he cultivated the friendship of the chiefs of several of the more powerful tribes, whom he gained over to his interest by timely donations of money, dresses of honour, and land for the pasturage of their flocks; in return for which favours

they were ready at his call to pour forth their numerous horsemen in pursuit of any predatory bands of other Bedouin tribes who ventured to make hostile incursions into his territory. By this prudent adoption of the well-known principle of 'divide et impera,' he had succeeded in so far weakening their general power, that the cultivated provinces in Egypt already enjoyed a state of comparative tranquillity.

This object once attained, he turned the energies of his active mind to the increase of his revenue; and not satisfied with those resources of agriculture which nature has indicated to be the chief if not the only wealth of Egypt, he already thought of rivalling at Boulak the silks of Lyons, the looms of Manchester, and the foundries of Birmingham. It was while his head was full of these projects, in the prosecution of which machinery of every kind was daily pouring into the country, that he received the visit of Mr. Thorpe and his party.

At the time of their entrance he was seated on a divan in the corner of the room farthest from the door, and beside him stood a middle-aged man whom they rightly conjectured to be his dragoon. He rose from his seat, and received them with the polite urbanity for which he was dis-

tinguished ; and motioned to the ladies to take their seats on the divan. Chairs having been prepared for the gentlemen, the one the nearest to his person was of course appropriated to Mr. Thorpe. While the first compliments were being exchanged, and the coffee was handed round in small cups of enamel, studded with diamonds, they had full leisure to examine the features and appearance of the conqueror and regenerator of the land of the Pharaohs.

Although below the average height, his active and firmly-knit form was well calculated for the endurance of the fatigues and exertions which his restless mind imposed upon it. On his head he wore a fez or cap, around which was wound a fine Cashmere shawl in the shape of a turban—for he had not yet adopted the tarboosh, which forms at present the unsightly head-dress of Turks and Egyptians. His forehead was high, bold, and square in its outline, subtended by shaggy eyebrows, from beneath which peered out a pair of eyes, not large, but deep-set, bright, and singularly expressive : when in anger, they shot forth fiery glances which few could withstand, and when he was in mirthful mood, they twinkled like stars reflected on the waters of the Nile. His nose was straight, with nostrils rather wide ; his mouth

well-shaped, though somewhat broad, while beneath it a massive chin, covered by a beard slightly grizzled by age, completed a countenance on which the character of a firm, determined will was indelibly stamped. He was dressed in a pelisse lined with fur, in the front of which protruded from his Cashmere belt the diamond-studded hilt of a dagger. Large loose trousers, and a pair of red slippers, according to the fashion of the day, completed his costume. Miss Emily would not, however, forgive me, if I omitted to mention that on the little finger of a hand small and delicate as that of a woman, shone a diamond of inestimable value.

After the interchange of the usual complimentary speeches and inquiries, such as—‘Whether Mr. Thorpe liked what he had seen of Egypt’—‘Whether they proposed ascending the Nile as far as the first cataract,’ &c., which the Viceroy’s interpreter translated into French, breakfast was announced. On his Highness leading the way into the adjoining apartment, they were agreeably surprised at seeing a table laid out in the European fashion, with the unexpected luxuries, not only of knives and forks, but likewise of chairs and snow-white napkins. The dragoman stood behind his master’s chair, and Emily was rather con-

fused at finding that the chief part of the conversation fell to her share—on account of her speaking French much more fluently than her parents or her brother. The Pasha was much pleased at this, for he was devoted to the fair sex, and a fairer specimen of it than Emily he had rarely seen.

With the exception of a pilau, and one or two Turkish dishes of pastry and sweetmeats, there was nothing to distinguish the breakfast from one served up in Paris. As soon as it was concluded, and the fingers of the guests had been duly purified by rose-water, poured from a silver-gilt vase, they returned to the reception-room, and resumed their former places. Scarcely were they seated than there entered a row of well-dressed young Mamelukes, each bearing before him a long pipe, with a mouthpiece of amber, ornamented with diamonds, which they presented to all the guests, as well as to the Pasha. Here was a novel embarrassment for most of the party. Of course, neither of the ladies had ever held a pipe between their lips; and Mr. Thorpe was as guiltless of tobacco as they were. The Pasha smiled, and told them, through his interpreter, that it was intended as a compliment, but the acceptance of it was optional.

Mrs. Thorpe, who had always termed it a nasty practice, absolutely declined. Emily, with a deprecatory look at her mother, took the pipe, and putting the pretty amber between her pretty lips, and making believe to smoke, pouted so prettily that the Viceroy heartily wished she were a Circassian, that he might buy her on the spot. Mr. Thorpe, wishing to be particularly civil, took two or three bonâ-fide puffs at the pipe, the result of which was, that he was nearly choked, and his eyes filled with tears. As he returned the pipe to the Mameluke who had brought it, and was still coughing in the greatest distress, he had the additional vexation of hearing Mrs. Thorpe say to him, in a low but audible voice—‘Serves you quite right, my dear.’ Such are the consolations which a wife—that ‘ministering angel’—offers to a husband suffering under the ‘pain and anguish’ of a first infraction of her veto on tobacco !

As for the Doctor and Selden, they were among the initiated, and therefore smoked with a vigour which astonished the Pasha’s attendants, and soon enveloped themselves in a cloud of Latakian vapour, which threatened to reduce Mrs. Thorpe to a level with her husband. She did not hesitate to give them a hint on the subject, and they also reluctantly gave up the pipes to the bearers.

The attendants having retired, the conversation on general topics was resumed ; and the Viceroy explained to Mr. Thorpe some of the projects then floating in his active brain, for introducing various branches of manufacturing industry into Egypt ; in reply to which Mr. Thorpe, who, although by no means a political economist, was a man of plain good sense, pointed out to his Highness the difficulties that he would obviously have to encounter from the want of hands (the agricultural population of Egypt not being sufficient to cultivate the arable soil), and also from the absence of the two most important elements of manufacturing industry—iron and coal.

‘ Ah !’ said the Pasha, laughing ; ‘ I know all that ; I shall have difficulties ; what can be done without difficulty ? All my life I have been contending against them ; I have always overcome them, and, Inshallah, I will do so still ! Did you see,’ he added, with increased animation, ‘ a canal that joins the Nile a few miles northward of this spot ?’ Mr. Thorpe had noticed it, but had not thought of inquiring whither it led. ‘ Well, then,’ continued the Pasha, ‘ that canal leads to a large village in the middle of the Delta, from which and from the neighbouring provinces it brings the produce down to the Nile. How do

you think I made that canal? You shall hear. Two years ago I stopped here on my way to Cairo from Alexandria, and having determined to make a canal from the Nile to that village, I sent for the chief engineer of the province, and having given him the length, breadth, and depth of the canal required, I asked him in what space of time he would undertake to make it. He took out his pen and his paper, and having made his calculations, he said that if I gave him an order on the Governor of the province for the labour he required, he would undertake to finish it in a year. My reply was a signal to my servants to throw him down and give him two hundred blows of the stick on his feet. This ceremony being concluded, I said to him, 'Here is the order for the number of labourers you may require; I am going to Upper Egypt, and shall come back in four months; if the canal is not completed by the day of my return, you shall have three hundred more.''

In relating this story the Pasha's eyes sparkled, and he almost jumped from his sitting posture with excitement, as he added, rubbing his hands—'By Allah, the canal was completed when I returned.'*

* A true story, and one that Mohammed Ali used to tell with great glee.

This tale affected the Thorpe party with various emotions. Mr. Thorpe balanced in his mind the contending claims of justice, and the exigencies of a semi-barbarous land under a semi-barbarous government. Mrs. Thorpe thought the Pasha (as she afterwards said) 'a little monster.' Emily, though conscious of the cruelty of the act, could scarcely help smiling at its novelty, and the self-satisfaction with which it was related; as for Dr. Moss, he began to feel very uncomfortable sensations about the soles of his feet, under the impression that, if he unintentionally offended so terrible a despot, nothing could save him from the bastinado.

The Viceroy having enjoyed for a few moments the recollection of his successful engineering, turned to Mr. Thorpe and said, with a graver air—

'I am sorry to have to speak on a disagreeable subject, but a letter has been brought to me by a horseman from the Governor of Atfeh, in which it is stated that a portion of the crew of your boat attacked the crew of a Government boat on the canal, and that they were set on and led by a young Arab of gigantic size, who nearly killed one of my kawàsses.'

Here Demetri, whose office had hitherto been

a sinecure, the translation having all passed through the Viceroy's interpreter, thinking it a good opportunity for displaying his descriptive powers, came forward, and addressing the Viceroy, said—

‘May it please your Highness, my friend Hassan—’

‘Silence, babbler,’ said the Pasha, in an angry voice; ‘you may speak when you are spoken to.’ So saying, he darted upon the unfortunate Greek a fiery glance that almost made his heart jump into his mouth.

‘Excuse me,’ said the Pasha to Mr. Thorpe, recovering himself immediately, as he observed Demetri steal noiselessly out of the room; ‘these servants, especially Smyrniotes, always tell lies, and I desired to hear the truth of this story from yourself.’

‘I was in the cabin,’ replied Mr. Thorpe; ‘but my daughter was on deck the whole time, and saw all that passed; she can give your Highness a correct report.’

‘If the young lady will so far favour me, I shall be obliged,’ said the Viceroy, with courteous gallantry.

Emily blushed a little, she scarcely knew why, at being called on to recount the adventure on

the canal ; but her momentary confusion did not prevent her from relating what had passed with the utmost accuracy. She noticed that at the pauses of her narrative, the interpreter made sundry marks on a letter which he held in his hand, and also that alternate smiles and frowns followed each other on the expressive countenance of Mohammed Ali. When she had ceased speaking, he thanked her, and after conversing a moment with his interpreter, proceeded to ask her a few questions connected with the letter which he held in his hand.

Question. 'Do you know whether it was by accident or design that the two boats ran against each other, and if accident, whose fault was it?'

Answer. 'I think it was certainly accident, as there had been no quarrel or cause of quarrel before ; whose fault it was I am not able to judge.'

Q. 'Are you sure that your crew did not attack the crew of the other boat first, with sticks or other weapons?'

A. 'I am sure that nothing but words had passed on either side until the kawàss threw the stone or brick.'

Q. 'Did you see him throw it?' said the Pasha, knitting his brows.

A. 'I saw him certainly, and he very nearly hurt me seriously, as your Highness may see.' While thus speaking, Emily, with the utmost naiveté, turned her cheek aside, and lifting up one of the brown curls that escaped from below her bonnet, she showed the slip of 'court-plaster' that still covered the hurt.

'Kàhpe-oghlou pezevènk !' said the Pasha, in an angry tone, looking towards his interpreter. (The words are untranslatable to ears polite, although they may fall from a Turk fifty times in a day. They may be rendered in this case, 'the infernal scoundrel !') 'One more question,' he added, 'I would beg to ask the young lady—You say that the youth you call Hassan jumped alone on the deck of the other boat ; how many men might there be on the deck at the time ?'

A. 'I did not count them ; there might be eight or ten ; some were pulling at a rope on shore.

Q. 'And how is it they did not drive him back, and prevent him from striking the kawàss ?'

A. 'I cannot tell ; I saw them strike at him on all sides, but it seems they had not power to stop him, for he reached the kawàss, broke his

sword, and beat him down before jumping into the canal.'

'Ajàib!—wonderful!' said the Viceroy, turning to his dragoman. 'What a tale is this; and if it be true, what dirt have these lying dogs been eating?' as he spoke, he pointed again to the letter he held in his hand.

'The Viceroy is astonished at your tale,' said the interpreter, addressing Emily; 'it differs so entirely from the report sent to him by the kawàss.'

'I grant that it seems improbable,' said Emily, slightly colouring; 'but as I own that I was very much frightened, if his Highness thinks that I have stated anything incorrectly, it is easy to know the truth. The rais of our boat was close beside me all the time, and saw what passed; let the Pasha send for him and make him relate what he saw.'

When this was translated to the Viceroy, his eyes sparkled again, and he said, turning to Mr. Thorpe—'The young lady is fit to be a Cadi; by Allah! with your leave, it shall be as she says.'

'By all means,' replied Mr. Thorpe; 'let the rais be brought before his Highness immediately.'

Demetri having been sent down to the boat, returned in a few minutes with the rais, whose

relation of the circumstances differed in no essential particular from that made by Emily.

‘Mashallah!’ said the Viceroy, ‘it is wonderful; with Mr. Thorpe’s permission I should like to see and question this youth.’

Mr. Thorpe having signified his acquiescence, Demetri was again sent to the boat, and soon returned, accompanied by Hassan.

CHAPTER X.

HASSAN IS PRESENTED TO THE VICEROY—THE THORPE PARTY MAKE THE ACQUAINTANCE OF MÜLLER THE MISSIONARY.

DURING the brief absence of Demetri in search of Hassan, the Viceroy had made some further inquiries concerning the latter, in reply to which Mr. Thorpe informed him that the young man had been in the employment of Hadji Ismael, and was now on his way to Cairo with letters for some pasha whose name Mr. Thorpe did not remember.

‘What, Hadji Ismael, our good Arab merchant?’ said the Viceroy.

‘The same,’ replied Mr. Thorpe.

Here the Viceroy spoke apart to the interpreter, by whose order an attendant brought a small box, containing letters, which he placed on the divan at his Highness’s side. The interpreter, by the Viceroy’s desire, ran his eye over two or three letters from Alexandria, till he found the one of which he was in search. He read a passage from it, at which Mohammed Ali laughed and chuckled immoderately, repeating over and over again,

‘Aferin ! aferin !’ (bravo, bravo). He then turned to Mr. Thorpe, saying—

‘I wonder whether this can be the same youth as the one mentioned in this letter, who threw the famous Moghrebi wrestler, Ebn-el-Ghaizi ? It is here written that he was in the employment of Hadji Ismael.’

‘There can be little doubt it is the same youth,’ replied Mr. Thorpe. ‘I have heard the whole story from our English servant. Indeed, it was in protecting him that Hassan got into a quarrel with the wrestler.’

‘Mashallah !’ said the Viceroy, ‘the youth deserves a reward, for that vagabond Moghrebi had beaten all the Egyptian wrestlers, and laughed at our beards.’

At this moment Hassan reached the door of the apartment, and the Viceroy, having given orders that he should be admitted, he came forward, and, having made the usual obeisance and touched his forehead with the skirt of the Viceroy’s pelisse, retired a few steps, and drawing himself up to his full height, awaited his prince’s commands in silence.

Mohammed Ali was one of those who had been accustomed from his youth to study the characters of men from their countenance and bearing, and

he now fixed upon Hassan an eye whose piercing gaze few cared to encounter ; but Hassan met it with a calm and untroubled look. ‘Mashallah ! a noble-looking youth,’ muttered he to himself, after scanning the athletic yet graceful proportions of the figure before him. He then turned to his dragoman, saying—

‘That youth is surely not an Arab. Of what race think you he may be?’

Before the dragoman could reply, Hassan, addressing the Viceroy, said—

‘It is right that your Highness should know that I understand Turkish, lest you should say anything not intended for my ear.*

‘Ha, ha ! I forgot that he had been in Alexandria some years,’ said the Viceroy in a low tone. He then added, aloud, ‘Hassan,—for so I hear you are called,—whence do you come?’

‘I was bred in the tents of your friends the Oulâd Ali,’ replied the youth.

‘A proud and a stubborn set of rogues they are,’ muttered the Viceroy in an under tone. He then continued aloud, knitting his shaggy brows as he spoke, ‘You are accused of having struck

* Notwithstanding his long residence in Egypt, Mohammed Ali understood but little Arabic, and could not speak it at all.

and nearly killed one of my kawàsses. What have you to say to the charge ?'

'It is true, and he deserved it !' replied Hassan.

'Deserved it !' repeated Mohammed Ali, his eye kindling with fire. 'Do you dare, youngster, to laugh at my beard, and to correct my servants at your pleasure ?'

'Mohammed Ali,' said the youth, with manly simplicity, 'I have been taught to venerate and not to laugh at a beard silvered by time. How, then, should I not honour yours, for I have longed to see you from my childhood, having heard so much of your skill and courage in war and your generosity in peace? But your Highness cannot know and cannot be answerable for the insolence of all your servants. Had you been where I was when that cowardly fellow threw a stone at the head of the young lady beside you, you would not have beaten him, you would have cut his head off.'

'By the head of my father !' said the Viceroy, pleased rather than offended at the unusual boldness of Hassan's speech—'By the head of my father ! I believe the boy is right. I have heard the whole story from these strangers and from the rais, and though I was prepared to be angry with

you, I now acquit you from blame. Where are you going to in Cairo, and what commission have you from our good merchant the Hadji ?

‘I am going with a letter from him,’ said Hassan, ‘to Deli Pasha.’

‘Deli (mad), indeed,’ said the Viceroy. ‘Ha ! I can guess ; it is about horses. Have you the letter with you ? Let me see it.’

Hassan with some hesitation withdrew the letter from a small silk bag which he carried in the folds of his girdle, and handed it to the Viceroy, who, without the slightest ceremony, opened it, and gave it to the interpreter to read to him, which he did in a tone audible only to the Viceroy himself.

‘It is all right,’ he said. ‘Give it back to Hassan, and let him take it on to Deli Pasha.’

‘Pardon me,’ said Hassan ; ‘I cannot receive it so. Deli Pasha might suspect me of having opened it. Let your Highness’s secretary write in the margin that it was opened by your order, and reseal it with your seal.’

‘By Allah !’ said Mohammed Ali, ‘the youth has brains, as well as goodly limbs. Call the khaznadâr.’* When that officer entered, the

* Khaznadâr or ‘treasurer.’ This officer often discharges the duties of a private secretary.

Viceroy, giving him the letter, whispered a few instructions in his ear, and he left the room.

It had not escaped the Viceroy's quick eye that Hassan had evinced some awkwardness or constraint in opening the silk bag containing the letter, and replacing it in his girdle, and he said to him—

‘These Frank travellers tell me that, while you were attacking the kawàss on that boat, you received some blows and a stab from one of the crew. Is this so?’

‘It is true,’ replied Hassan; ‘but the blows were nothing, and the stab was of little consequence; the bleeding from it was soon stopped.’

‘Does it hurt you now?’ demanded the Pasha.

‘A little,’ he replied. ‘But it is not worth your Highness's notice.’

‘You are a madcap,’ said the Viceroy; ‘and young blood thinks nothing of wounds. Raise up your left arm to your head.’

Hassan tried to obey, but the arm fell powerless at his side.

‘Ha!’ said the Pasha, ‘I knew it was so.’ Then turning to his interpreter, who was, in fact, a medical man, he continued, ‘Hakim Bashi, take him into another room, and examine his wound, and, while you are away, let that Greek

come in again to interpret. His tongue will not run so fast now.'

The doctor accordingly conveyed Hassan to his own apartment, and the conversation was resumed through the medium of Demetri, who had been so thoroughly abashed by his first rebuff, that he would not risk a second, but performed his interpreting duties with an accuracy which surprised himself—that is, he did not add more than one-third from his own head, and as that was chiefly in the way of reciprocal compliment, it was not of much consequence.

A quarter of an hour, then half an hour, passed away, and still neither the doctor nor his patient returned. Several cups of coffee had been presented, and nearly an hour had elapsed ere the Hakim Bashi entered the room alone.

'Come here,' cried out the impatient Viceroy. 'By Allah! your absence has been long. Where is the youth?'

'I left him lying on a divan in my room, your Highness, and he must not be moved for at least twenty-four hours.'

'Was his hurt, then, so bad?' inquired the Pasha.

'It was such,' said the doctor, 'that if your Highness had not desired me to examine and

dress it, in a few days the amputation of his arm at the shoulder might have been necessary. When I stripped him, I found on the top of the shoulder a large blue circle, which convinced me that there was something seriously wrong below. I was obliged to cut it open, and to cut deep, too. Then I took my probes and began to examine the bottom of the wound. As the inflammation was great, the pain must have been most acute; but, my lord, I never saw such a youth as that. He remained as firm and unmoved as if he had been made of wood or stone; and in the middle of the operation he said to me with a smile, 'Hakim Bashi, Mashallah! what an eye our prince has got.' At last my instrument met with some hard substance, which, with some trouble, I succeeded in reaching with a forceps, and I drew it out. It proved to be the point of the dagger with which he had been stabbed, and which, encountering the bone, had broken off. Here it is.' So saying, he produced to the Viceroy about half an inch of the point of a steel dagger.

'Aferin! aferin!' (bravo, bravo), said the Viceroy. 'Well have you done, my good Hakim Bashi. The young man will recover the use of his arm now.'

'Yes, if it be the will of Allah. But he must

remain at least twenty-four hours in the position in which I have placed him. In that time I shall dress the wound once or twice, and at this hour to-morrow I can tell your Highness whether he is fit to pursue his journey.'

The ladies of the Thorpe party shuddered as Demetri translated to them the Hakim Bashi's narrative; and as they looked at the steel point taken out of Hassan's shoulder, which the Viceroy still held between his finger and thumb, Emily felt her heart beat when she thought that the gallant youth had so nearly lost a limb, if not his life, in avenging an insult offered to her.

'What do you think,' said Mohammed Ali, addressing Mr. Thorpe; 'if I had two or three regiments composed of fellows like this Hassan, might I not march to —— any part of the world?' Another termination was on his lips, but he checked it, and substituted the vague phrase above given. A slight smile might have been noticed on the face of the medical interpreter, who well knew the word that had nearly escaped his chief, although the idea was not carried into execution until many years had passed.

'I have travelled in many countries,' replied Mr. Thorpe, 'and can assure your Highness that men of the stature, strength, and symmetry of

Hassan are rare everywhere ; but your Highness knows better than I do, and has proved it to the world, that however advantageous to the individual may be the possession of these qualities, in an army there is nothing but discipline among the men, and skill in their commander, that can insure success.'

'May your life be long !' said the Viceroy, acknowledging the compliment ; 'but now you must tell me what you wish to do, for you see this Hassan cannot go forward for a day or two. Will you wait for him, or will you pursue your journey, and I will have him sent on in the first boat that passes ?'

'Nay,' said Mr. Thorpe, 'we are not so hurried but that we can wait for a day ; and it would be unkind to leave him behind, as he received his wound in defending us.'

'Be it so,' replied the Pasha ; and there is another advantage in your staying. The Governor of Damietta has written me word that a Christian kassis* is coming up the river on his way to the South. They say he is a very learned man, and has been some years in these countries : perhaps you might like to join him to your party ?'

* The term kassis is applied in Egypt indiscriminately to Christian clergymen of every sect and denomination.

‘Willingly,’ replied Mr. Thorpe, ‘if he arrives in time. Meanwhile, I will take my leave, having trespassed too much on your Highness’s time.’ So saying, he arose, but the Viceroy would not let him go until he had made him promise to come again on the morrow to breakfast.

The Thorpe party returned to their boat, and spent the remainder of the day in talking over the occurrences of the morning, and in discussing the character and qualities of the remarkable man whom they had seen for the first time. Selden quizzed his sister most maliciously, and declared that the old gentleman was decidedly in love with her, and, with assumed gravity, recommended his parents to slip off unperceived at night-fall, lest she should be forcibly carried off, and transferred to the viceregal harem. Emily entered into the joke, and said—‘Oh! how delightful to be Sultana of Egypt, with hundreds of beautiful slaves, and Cashmere shawls and jewels!’

‘Very pleasant indeed, Emmie,’ said her brother, ‘to take your place in the harem, surrounded by the spiteful faces of half a dozen former wives whom you had displaced, and then after a few months to sit in a corner yourself, and scowl spitefully upon some new face for which you had been discarded.’

At this moment Demetri came into the cabin, and said that the Viceroy's interpreter was without, accompanied by a stranger. Orders having been given for his immediate admission, he came in and said to Mr. Thorpe—

‘ I have been charged by the Viceroy to present to you Mr. Müller, concerning whom his Highness spoke to you ; and I do it with much pleasure, as he is a friend of mine, and a most worthy person.’

While the ceremony of introduction is going forward, we will take the opportunity of describing to the reader the personal appearance of the new comer.

He was apparently about forty-five years of age, short in stature, but stoutly built. His countenance, though homely, was intelligent and benevolent, and his complexion, from long exposure to sun and weather, was tanned almost to the hue of an Arab. On his head he wore what had once been a German cap, but which, from the folds of grey serge wrapped around it, might almost pass for a turban ; and his beard, which was bushy and slightly grizzled, fell nearly half way to his waist. His outer dress was composed of a long robe or gaberdine of dark grey cloth, with loose sleeves, and confined at the waist by a

leathern girdle, from which depended a bag, made from the skin of an antelope, and containing—— but stay, I will not attempt to detail the contents of that bag ; let it suffice to say, that it contained all the sundries which the good missionary most frequently required in his long excursions in the forest and desert. His shoes, or rather his sandals, were not very becoming, for they were of undressed hide, and he had made them himself ; and he carried in his hand a stout staff nearly as high as himself, which he had brought from the Abyssinian woods, and which had been his constant companion in many a remote peregrination.

The two visitors remained some time, and the conversation turned on Egypt and the wilder regions to the southward, with all of which Müller seemed so familiar and described them with so much truthful simplicity, that the Thorpe party were delighted with him—all excepting Dr. Moss, who apprehended, not without reason, that the knowledge and acquirements of the new comer would throw his own pretensions into the shade. The conversation passed in French, which obliged Emily to bear the chief burden of it on her side. Müller spoke the language fluently, but with an accent that left no doubt on her mind of his being a German.

The visitors having taken their leave, the Thorpes were again alone, and interchanged their opinions concerning Müller; these were generally in his favour, only Dr. Moss maintained a dignified silence, and Mrs. Thorpe said she thought his beard and dress most uncivilized, and his shoes quite frightful.

On the following day they returned to breakfast with the Pasha, and were glad to learn from the interpreter that Hassan had passed a quiet night, and that the inflammation had so far subsided that he might go on board without risk.

‘I have no fear,’ said the medical interpreter, ‘of any bad consequences now that you have agreed on going in company with Müller; he has had so much experience, that he is half a doctor himself: indeed,’ he added, smiling, ‘I doubt whether he has not more skill than many who hold the diploma?’

The breakfast passed as agreeably as that of the preceding day, and after it Hassan was summoned into the Pasha’s presence. He came in with his left arm in a sling, a precaution which the interpreter insisted upon his observing for some days at least. His Highness spoke kindly to him, and after receiving the thanks of the youth for the at-

tention shown to him by the interpreter, the latter was desired by the chief to re-seal and restore to the youth the letter from the merchant to Deli Pasha, adding in the margin that it had been opened by himself, and, in conclusion, he whispered a few words in his ear, to which the interpreter only replied by the customary 'On my head be it.'

A few minutes sufficed to execute this order, and when the interpreter returned the letter to Hassan, he at the same time presented another to Mr. Thorpe, informing him that it contained an order to the Kiahya Pasha* to furnish his party with an escort to the Pyramids, and a guard while remaining there. His Highness also said that on their return from Upper Egypt he should probably be at Shoobra,† and he hoped they would come to see him there. While giving this invitation, his Highness cast his keen glance so full upon Emily's face that she blushed deeply, having just caught her brother's eye, and feeling how that

* This term, *kiahya*, now common all over Turkey, is a corruption of the Persian word *ket-khoda*, and signifies 'master of the house,' 'vicegerent,' &c. The *kiahya* in Egypt is next in rank to the viceroy.

† Shoobra, a very pretty garden and palace, built and occupied by Mohammed Ali; it is about three miles from Cairo, on the bank of the river.

mischievous young gentleman would again tease her on the subject.

Mr. Thorpe having duly expressed his thanks for his Highness's hospitality and kindness, now rose to take his departure, and Hassan came forward and touched his forehead with the skirt of the Viceroy's pelisse; Mohammed Ali looked at him with a smile, and said—

‘ Good fortune attend you, Hassan—a mad follower going to join a mad lord—but you are a good lad, and I am pleased with you.’

The whole party now retired to their boat, Hassan taking an opportunity before they went to thank the medical interpreter for the service he had rendered him in restoring him the use of his arm.

CHAPTER XI.

THE THORPES RE-EMBARK ON THE NILE, AND EMILY WRITES ANOTHER LONG LETTER TO HER FRIEND AT MALTA, ENCLOSING AN ARAB LEGEND.

OUR party now pursued their way merrily towards Cairo, Mr. Thorpe's impatience to see his beloved pyramids becoming every hour more uncontrollable.

Müller's canjah* kept company with them, and it had been agreed before they started that he should pass the day on board the large boat, and retire at night to sleep in his own; by this means he was enabled every day to dress Hassan's shoulder according to the advice given him by the medical interpreter.

The voyage was slow, and unaccompanied by incidents of interest to any excepting our friend Demetri, who daily landed at some village to purchase milk, fowls, and a lamb for the party; and as he only put them down in his account at one hundred per cent. over the cost price, Mrs. Thorpe, instead of complaining of the charges,

* A canjah is a Nile boat, much smaller and lighter than a dahabiàh.

only expressed her wonder at the cheapness of provisions. We shall not be surprised at the good lady's satisfaction when we remember that at the period of which we write one hundred eggs were bought for a piaster,* a couple of fowls for the same amount, and a sheep for five piasters.

Demetri's time was, as we have said, thus pleasantly and profitably spent. How it was passed by the rest of the party we may best learn from one of themselves, for which purpose we will take the liberty of looking over Emily's shoulder again, and transcribing that portion of her letter to her friend in Malta which describes their trip to Cairo after leaving the Viceroy :—

‘And now, my dearest Henrietta, having described to you our visit to that extraordinary man, and all his kindness to us, which that saucy Selden declares is owing to his being smitten by your humble servant, I sit down to give you a sketch of the remainder of our journey to the Egyptian capital.

‘Incidents we have had very few, and my sketch-book will, when we meet, afford you proof that I have not been idle. We have found the Missionary Müller a great addition to our party ; he is the best, and the queerest, and the cleverest

* A piaster is about twopence-halfpenny.

creature I ever beheld ; he really seems to me to know everything ; for the first day we spoke in French, but he soon found that papa and mamma were embarrassed to speak in that language, so he suddenly said in English almost as good as our own—

‘ ‘ Why do you not speak to me in English ? ’

‘ You may believe that the challenge was joyfully accepted, and since then no foreign language has polluted our cabin, excepting when that odious Dr. Moss has attempted some of his absurd quotations.

‘ I cannot help it, dear Hennie, but, *entre nous*, I hate that tiresome man ! He always speaks as if he were preaching a sermon, and gives an opinion as if he were Sir Oracle, while Müller, in whose little finger there is more knowledge than in the other’s skull, is always cheerful and unpretending. Moss, as you may imagine, cannot bear him, for all his Oriental pretensions are dwindled into a very small compass in presence of a man who speaks Arabic to Hassan apparently with as much fluency as if speaking English.

‘ But as I was saying before, there is nothing that Müller does not know, and nothing that he cannot do. You would fancy him a missionary

from the Jack-of-all-trades Society; and whatever you may happen to want, at any hour of the day, whether it be a pencil, scissors, string, needle-and-thread, soap, pen, ink, and paper, anything else you can dream of, you are sure to see it on demand emerging from the bag attached to his girdle. He has travelled a great deal in Nubia and the adjoining regions, and speaks several of those barbarous languages.

‘ You would never guess who is his most constant companion when on our boat. It is Hassan. I could not resist asking him the other day, after a conversation which they had held, and which seemed to me to have lasted above an hour, what he could find to interest him so much in Hassan’s conversation, and whether it was about fighting and hunting.

‘ ‘ No,’ he replied, with a good-humoured smile, ‘ is was about religion.’

‘ ‘ Religion!’ I exclaimed, in astonishment; ‘ I can understand that he should listen to you on such a subject, but I observed that he spoke more and more vehemently than you did yourself.’

‘ ‘ True, lady; but I could not blame him, for I attacked, and he defended his faith. I had before observed in him so much unselfishness, modesty, and such a love of truth, that I thought

it my duty to try if I might not lead him to the way of truth where we know it to be. Alas ! alas !' continued the good man, 'with him as with all true Mussulmans, it is next to an impossibility. They have got the one great undeniable truth—the Unity of God—so indelibly stamped upon their conviction, that any attempt to make them understand, or even consider the doctrine of the Trinity, is attended with such difficulties as amount almost to an impossibility ! The words with which Hassan closed our conversation were these—'There is no God but Allah, the days of fighting the Mushrekin, and planting the true faith with the sword are gone—now we can only pity them.'

‘Who are the Mushrekin?’ I inquired.

‘The term signifies,’ he replied, ‘those who assign a partner ; and it is applied especially to Christians, who, in the estimation of the Moslem, assign in their doctrine of the Trinity two other persons or spirits as partners with the Creator.’

‘Whence could Hassan,’ I asked, ‘learn to discuss such subjects; has he any learning?’

‘He has no learning,’ replied Müller ; ‘but he knows his Koran well, and reads it constantly. He knows not that all which is most valuable in its moral precepts was taken from our Bible ; but his heart is simple, his faith fixed, and his will

strong and determined. There is hardly a tribe in the deserts of Southern Africa, or in the islands of the Southern Ocean where a missionary may not hope for some reward for his labours, but to convert an honest and believing Mussulman is a task almost hopeless.'

'The following day we continued our course up the Nile, passing by a number of villages and palm-groves, and towards evening I resumed my favourite seat on the upper-deck, to see the beautiful Egyptian sunset; the Missionary Müller was by me, and interested me much by descriptions of the Soudan. Hassan was quite in the stern of the boat, reciting or chaunting in a low voice. I asked Müller if he knew what the young man was repeating, but he could not catch the words, and said it is doubtless some old Arab legend. I felt a great desire to hear a recitation of this kind, and I inquired of the missionary whether he could prevail upon Hassan to repeat it to us.

'He got up, and approaching Hassan, made the request. I could see that some hesitation and difficulties arose; but they were soon overcome, and Müller returned, bringing with him Hassan, who sat down in his old place between me and the rais. Then Müller said to me—

“ Hassan desires the young lady to be informed

that he is not a *ràwi* (a teller of stories), but that he knows some old Arab legends. If it pleases her, he will tell the tale of *Rabîah*. It is,' added Müller, 'a legend of great antiquity, and its scene is laid in Arabia.'

'I told him it would give me great pleasure to hear it, so Hassan commenced without delay.

'Oh, Henrietta! I wish you could have been by me to have heard that strange recital. Although I could not understand a word, it moved me almost to tears. After the first few lines, his faculties seemed all wrapt up in the tale; now the voice was deep and guttural, then it grew soft and sad; then came some scene of anger or strife, and his eyes flashed fire; then came a plaintive tone, which dropping almost to a whisper, suddenly stopped. I felt sure that the hero or the heroine was dead, and the tears actually stood in Müller's eyes, and the old *rais* at the helm uttered several sighs, or rather groans, in succession. Only think how provoking that I could not understand a word!

'On expressing my vexation, Müller kindly said that he would make me a translation of the tale on the morrow, correcting it from Hassan's own lips. He did so, and here I send you a copy, dearest Henrietta, to conclude this letter :—

' RABIAH.

' Rabîah was feeble, slowly recovering from severe wounds. Who has not heard of Rabîah?—the Lion of the Nejd, whose eyes were like burning coals, whose form was like the at'l (oak), whose voice was as a tempest; before his lance the brave fell bathed in blood, and the timid fled like herds of antelopes.

' When Rabîah came forth to battle and shouted his war-cry, the maidens of the Otèbah wrung their hands, saying, 'Alas for my brother!' 'Alas for my beloved!' and the mother, pressing her babe to her breast, cried, 'Oh, my child, wilt thou see thy father to-morrow?'

' Now Rabîah was feeble.

' Some months before he had borne away from the tents of the Otèbah, Selma, the pearl of the tribe; her form was like the Egyptian willow, her face like the full moon in its brightness, her eyes were those of the antelope, and her teeth pearls set between two cushions of rose leaves, her neck was a pillar of camphor,* and her breasts two pomegranates rivalling each other in rounded beauty.

* Where in Europe it is customary to say as 'white as wool,' or 'white as snow,' the Orientals say 'white as camphor.' The 'camphor-neck' of a beauty is an image constantly recurring in Arabic poetry.

‘ But Selma’s eyes were averted, as if in scorn, and while Rabîah was consumed by the fire of love, her heart was a locked casket whose contents none might know.

‘ The season was spring, and the tribe, with their warriors and tents, their flocks and herds, had moved on to a higher region. Rabîah, retarded by his wounds, had remained behind, keeping with him only a few followers, his sister, and Selma ; but anxiety came upon his mind, and he said, ‘ Let us go to join the tribe.’

‘ So they went, the two maidens riding in a musàttah,* and he also on a shibriah,† and thus they journeyed, and Rabîah sung, in a feeble voice, the following words :—

‘ Alas, my heart is bleeding ! the arrows of the Otèbah have tasted my blood ;

But their hurt is nothing : it is the glance of Selma’s eye that hath pierced my heart.’

‘ The maidens heard the song, but Selma spoke not, and his sister wept for his wounds, but more for his unrequited love.

‘ On the second day they passed a mountain, and reaching a sandy plain they journeyed slowly across it.

* Musàttah, a camel-litter for carrying two persons.

† A shibriah, a camel-litter for a single person.

‘ Suddenly a cloud of dust appeared in the distance, and one of the followers sped on a swift horse to see whence it arose. The maidens trembled like willow-leaves in the morning breeze, but Rabîah slept. The man soon returned with a loosened rein and bloody heel, shouting—

‘ ‘ It is a large body of the Otèbah, and they are coming this way ; there is no hope of escape ; there is neither strength nor power save in Allah !’

‘ ‘ Rabîah,’ cried his sister, distracted with fear, ‘ canst thou do nothing to save us ? Wilt thou see Selma carried off before thine eyes ? The Otèbah are coming !’

‘ At these words Rabîah started up as if from a dream ; his eyes shone like two suns.

‘ ‘ Bring me my led war-horse,’ he shouted to his men, ‘ and fasten on my armour ; let us see what enemy dare come near Selma while Rabîah lives.’

‘ Still while they fastened on his armour his old wounds opened afresh, and the blood trickled from them, and he sung the following lines :—

‘ Truly, to be near her and not have her love is worse than
twenty deaths ;
But to die for her is sweeter than to drink the waters of
Keswer.*’

* A perpetual fountain of the purest water in the Mahomedan Paradise.

‘When Selma heard these words she turned towards him, and tears dropped from her eyes upon her soft cheek, like dew-drops on a rose.

‘‘Rabîah,’ she cried, ‘thy great love hath torn away the veil of pride and deceit from my heart; truly my love is equal to thine; come to my arms, my beloved, let us live or die together.’

‘Then the camels were made to kneel, and Rabîah came to the side of her litter, and she cast her arms about his neck, and he kissed her on the mouth, and their lips did not separate till their souls passed into each other, and they forgot the world.

‘But the followers cried aloud, ‘Rabîah, the Otèbah are coming!’ and he tore himself from her embrace; and his great war-horse stood beside him stamping on the ground, for his ear caught the tramp of the steeds, and his wide nostrils snuffed the coming fight. None but Tarrad could bear that mighty warrior through the ranks of the foe; he was swift as an antelope, and like an elephant in his strength.

‘‘Now Rabîah’s armour was fastened, and his helmet on his head. He looked once more upon Selma, and repeated the following lines:—

‘Our souls have drunk together the water of life,
There is no separation now, not even in death.’

‘Then he mounted Tarrad, and took his great spear in his hand, though his limbs were stiff, and his wounds still bled beneath his armour.

‘‘Make all speed,’ said he, ‘with the camels to the Horseman’s Gap;* beyond it is the plain where our tribe is encamped, there you will be safe.’

‘So they went; and when he saw the Otèbah drawing near, his great heart rose within him; he forgot his wounds, and the fire shot from his eyes. Then he rode towards them, and shouted his battle-cry aloud. Their hearts trembled within them, and none came forth to meet him.

‘But Fèsal, the young chief of the band, who was brother to Selma, reproached them, saying—

‘‘Are ye men, or are ye sheep, that one hundred are afraid of one? Has he not slain our brethren, and carried away the pearl of our tribe? Now is the hour of revenge.’

‘And he went forth at speed to strike Rabîah to the earth with his lance, but Rabîah met him in full career, and warded the blow. With the shock of meeting, Fèsal and his horse rolled together on the ground.

* The Horseman’s Gap is a singular cleft in the high rocks which met at the end of the plain, just leaving a passage wide enough for horsemen to pass in single file.

‘Then Rabîah wheeled round to slay him, but the young man’s helmet had fallen off, and Rabîah knew his face, and spared him, saying—

‘ ‘Thou art Selma’s brother.’

‘ ‘Then he charged the band, and he raged among them like a wolf in a sheepfold, and he pierced a strong warrior through the body—the man fell from his horse, and the lance broke. Then they set up a shout of rage and triumph; yet they would not come near him, for he had drawn his limb-dividing sword, so they shot arrows at him from a distance.

‘Casting his eyes behind him, he saw that his camels were entering the gap, and he retreated slowly, covering himself from the arrows with his shield; thus he gained the mouth of the defile. There he stood and faced them; and though the arrows showered upon him, and blood was flowing fast down the flanks of Tarrad, he spoke and moved not, but sat still, like a horseman carved in stone in the gap.

‘But soon an arrow entering the eye of Tarrad reached his brain, and he fell dead. Then Rabîah lay down behind his horse’s body, covering himself also with his shield, so that they saw him not; but they continued shooting their arrows, until Fèsal, who had mounted another horse, came up, and stayed them, saying—

‘ ‘The horse is dead, and Rabîah must now be our prisoner.’

‘Then he rode forward with a few followers, and called aloud, ‘Rabîah, yield thyself; escape is now impossible,’ but Rabîah gave no answer.

‘Fèsal then advanced still nearer, and repeated the same words, adding—

‘ ‘It is useless to shed more blood.’

‘But Rabîah gave no reply.

‘Then he approached with the caution of a hunter coming near a wounded lion, till he reached the spot, and looked upon his face.

‘Rabîah was dead !

‘Then pity took possession of the heart of Fèsal, and having told his followers to place the body of Rabîah and of his horse gently on one side, he galloped alone after the party which had retreated through the gap, and he knew that his sister was one; and seeing that they prepared to shoot their arrows, he called to them,

‘ ‘Put away your weapons; this is the hour of grief and not of war.’ And he drew near to the litter, and said—

‘ ‘Sad is the news of my tongue—Rabîah is dead—the Lion of the Nejd is no more.’

‘Then a piercing shriek came from the sister of Rabîah, and she cried,

‘ ‘Let us go back to him.’

‘Selma spoke not a word; a great stone was upon her heart, and speech and tears were denied her.

‘So they turned back; and when they reached the spot there was a dead silence, while the camel was made to kneel down, and the two maidens came forth.

‘Rabîah’s sister wept and sobbed, holding her dead brother’s hand, but Selma threw herself on the body of her beloved, and cast her arms about his neck, and again she pressed her lips to his cold lips. None dared to move her, and Allah had mercy upon her, and her soul passed away in that last kiss.

‘For many months there was wailing and lamentation among the tribes, and there was peace among them, for war lay buried in the grave where Rabîah and Selma slept side by side.’*

* The legend of Rabîah is one of the most ancient now known in the East. It was first communicated to me in the shape of an old Arab MS. by that eminent and much-regretted Arabic scholar, M. Fresnel, who obligingly assisted me in deciphering some of the more obscure passages. I believe he translated and sent it to one of the European Oriental magazines; but I have never seen it myself in print. As it is ten years since I saw the MS., I cannot remember exactly how far the tale in our text deviates from the original. The names which I have introduced are taken at random among names common in the Nejd; but I distinctly remember that of Rabîah, and his heroic death in the gap, as forming the catastrophe of the legend.

CHAPTER XII.

EMILY WRITES ANOTHER LETTER TO HER FRIEND, IN WHICH SHE GIVES HER A SKETCH OF CAIRO—HASSAN PAYS HIS FIRST VISIT TO DELI PASHA.

Emily to Henrietta Clayton.

Boulak, 182—.

‘MY DEAREST HENRIETTA,
‘In my last I occupied so much space with the tale of ‘Rabîah,’ that I left myself little or none to give you a sketch of our voyage up to this place, which is the Port of Cairo, the modern city being about two miles distant from the river. When I use the word modern, you must understand it comparatively in reference to the other monuments in this extraordinary country ; for in that very modern city there sat once the famous Salah-ed-din whom we in Europe call Saladin.

‘Our voyage up the Nile, from the date of my last letter, presented nothing remarkable ; there were the same flat, Dutch-looking banks, crowned with mud villages and palms, while here and there a few old sycamores gave variety to the scene. The crew sung in the evenings ; papa and

the missionary Müller talked about antiquities, and Dr. Moss bored poor Selden with his dull pedantry; but two days ago the rais told us that we should soon see the Pyramids, and you may imagine how we stood on tiptoe, and strained our eyes.

‘At last they broke on our view, not as we expected, a-head of our boat, but far away on our right. Poor papa was in ecstasies, and his impatience knew no bounds; but our progress was slow against the stream, and the course of the river provokingly winding, so it was fully twenty-four hours before we got a good view of those objects of our pilgrimage.

‘I looked at them, Hennie, with awe, not for their exceeding magnitude or beauty of architecture, but for their venerable antiquity. ‘Ye have looked on Moses, and on the plague-stricken Pharaohs,’ I said to myself, ‘and to you Homer and Achilles, and the monuments of ancient Greece and of ancient Rome are things of yesterday!’

‘While I was musing I heard our butler, Mr. Foyster, explaining to Mary Powell, in his own peculiar Cockney dialect, the history of these Egyptian antiquities. I hope it was not wrong to listen, Hennie, but I could not help it, and I caught the following dialogue:—

‘‘Them, Mary, is the famous Pyramids, and the books say that there they stood when Potiphar’s wife found Joseph among the bulrushes.’

‘‘I believe it was Pharaoh’s daughter,’ said Mary, who knew her bible rather better than Mr. Foyster, ‘who found Moses there.’

‘‘Well, you needn’t catch a body up so sharp,’ said Mr. Foyster, testily. ‘How do you know as Potiphar’s wife warn’t the daughter of Pharaoh?’

‘To this inquiry poor Mary had no ready reply, so she hung down her head in silence, and Mr. Foyster, encouraging her humility, proceeded.

‘‘Well, Mary, they say as how that biggest pyramid was built by one Cheops, and he was butler to King Pharaoh.’

‘‘That great building made by a butler,’ said Mary, raising up her eyes to his face with undisguised astonishment.

‘‘Yes, Miss Mary,’ he replied, drawing himself up with dignity, ‘butlers was suspected in their situations in those days.’

‘I heard no more of their conversation, for papa came up to speak to me, but you will judge from those few words how accurate is likely to be the antiquarian information communicated by Mr. Foyster to Mary during our stay in Egypt.

‘ There being no good inn in Cairo we remain on board our boat, and it is anchored off a lovely island in the mid-channel of the Nile, called Rhoda ; it belongs to Ibrahim Pasha, the eldest son of the Viceroy. We have permission to walk in it at all hours, of which mamma avails herself freely in company with Mary, for she cannot overcome her dislike to the donkey-riding, and I delight in it, Hennie ; they go so fast, and have such an easy pace, and then you have running behind your saddle a grinning urchin, who looks for all the world as if he had just come out in life from that Murillo picture of papa’s in the dining-room.

‘ Papa and I generally go together, always accompanied by Demetri, and sometimes by Selden and the Doctor ; the latter sometimes tries to make a purchase in the bazaars, and brings out his Arabic for the occasion, but he says ‘ it is too good and classical for these stupid people.’ At all events, they usually stare in his face, and on his repeating his demand they ask Demetri what he means !

‘ The road from Boulak up to the city is very dusty and disagreeable, and is relieved by no shade, either from houses or trees, nor is the entrance into Cairo from this side at all striking, leading

as it does through a marshy space called the Esbekiah,* and it is not until you have passed through the Frank quarter, and have reached the bazaars, that you begin to be aware of the picturesque beauty of Cairo.

‘The bazaars themselves are covered streets, to which the sun never penetrates ; on each side are the shops, and at the door of each sits the proprietor—sometimes almost buried in his wares—the everlasting pipe is in his mouth, and many of its fumes are necessary to the completion of the simplest bargain. My favourite bazaar is one called the Khan Khalil, because there are heavy chains at its entrance to prevent the ingress of donkeys and horses ; and there is another very interesting one called the Ghouriah, where are the vendors of silks, muslins, and cashmeres ; for you must know, Hennie, that in Cairo, and, I believe, in most large towns in the East, the different trades reside in separate streets or bazaars, called after their respective names ; thus you have the street of the braziers, the saddlers, the armourers, &c. &c.

‘ Rogues and cheats abound here as everywhere,

* The gardens of the Esbekiah, now the favourite promenade of the French loungers, was, at the date of our tale, an unreclaimed swamp.

but I fear none greater than some whom we have brought with us ; you shall hear. The other day I stopped with papa and Demetri at the shop of a silk mercer, where we sat down as usual, while the owner exposed his wares to our view ; I was much struck by a pretty Damascus scarf with a border of flowers, and edged with gold ; indeed I was thinking how well it would look on the shoulders of one Henrietta Clayton, so I asked papa to buy it.

‘Demetri’s services being called into action, he began to bargain with the owner of the shop ; such noises you never heard, they screamed and gesticulated, shaking their fingers in each other’s faces, and every moment I expected a blow to follow. A crowd collected around the shop, and looked on the bargaining with grave interest, every now and then one of the turbaned and bearded bystanders, evidently a friend of the shopman, passing his hand over the scarf and exclaiming on its beauties.

‘Just as the bargain was about to be concluded, I saw a figure towering above the crowd, which I immediately knew to be that of Hassan, but, as he was behind Demetri, the latter did not see him. Hassan, giving me a slight salute of recognition, stood at the side of the shop appa-

rently absorbed in the contemplation of a red sash which was hanging there.

‘After a short pause, Demetri, turning to papa, said—

‘‘I cannot make him take less than 600 piasters (6*l*).’

‘Papa was pulling out his purse to give it, when Hassan strode forward, and placing his hand on Demetri’s shoulder, looked in his face with a stern, inquiring glance. Demetri turned pale as death, and trembled all over; Hassan appearing not to notice his confusion, said in a clear, loud voice to papa—

‘‘Demetri has made a mistake, the merchant said 400 piasters,’ which sum was immediately paid and received.

‘Hassan gave us another grave salute and walked away, but I could see that Demetri followed him as he went with a look very like a dagger; but he soon recovered his self-possession, and said that he had been bargaining for that scarf and a smaller one beside it, which he thought I fancied, and that the two together would have been 600 piasters !

‘I feigned to believe him, but I shall watch Mr. Demetri’s bargains more closely in future.

‘Some of the most interesting specimens of

architecture in Cairo are arched gateways of the old walls now in the interior of the town ; I hope to transfer one or two of them to my sketch-book before I leave. Still more interesting are the mosques, which are, many of them, very ancient, and of great architectural beauty ; the most ancient was built by Amrou, who conquered Egypt in the time of Mohammed, and the most modern is, as I am informed, three hundred years old. The letter which the Viceroy had given to papa for the Governor procured us admission to several of the finest mosques, but we were obliged to take with us four of the government kawasses.

‘ I noticed when we entered the mosques that some of the more bigoted of the Moslem scowled angrily, and muttered what, I doubt not, were imprecations upon us.

‘ Papa seemed to admire above all the mosque of Sultan Hassan ; it is very spacious and lofty, and was built, it is said, in 1350. I felt more interested in one or two of the smaller and more ancient ones, such as the Sèid-ez-Zeinab, which was built more than a hundred years before our Norman conquest.

‘ But I should weary you, dear Hennie, were I to attempt to describe these buildings, as a principal feature in their character is the extreme

beauty of the arabesques and devices with which they are ornamented within and without. Although these cannot be described by the pen, at least not by mine, I hope that my sketch-book will give you some idea of them. We are now busy in preparing for our excursion to the Pyramids, and Hassan has promised to obtain leave to join us.

‘ So no more at present from

‘ Yours affectionately,

‘ E. T.’

We now resume the thread of our narrative, at the time of the arrival of the dahabiàhs at Boulak, when Hassan, having taken leave of his hospitable friends, and promised to pay them an early visit, proceeded to discover the house of Delì Pasha, in order to enter upon his new duties.

On inquiry he learnt that the Pasha did not live in the city, but in one of the large houses recently built on the banks of the Nile, above the Port of Boulak, and below the palaces lately constructed by Mohammed Ali and Ibrahim Pasha for the harems of the Viceregal family.

On reaching the door of the house indicated to him, he was informed by the Berber porter, in reply to his inquiry, that the Pasha was within,

so he passed into the entrance-hall, at the end of which he observed one or two slaves lounging about, from whom he learnt that their master had lately come down from the upper apartments, and was now in the court-yard at the back of the palace. Availing himself of the guidance of one of the slaves, he soon reached the court-yard, a large space covering two or three acres of ground, and surrounded by a high wall. Here he found a motley crowd assembled, consisting apparently of Mamelukes, grooms, and servants of all descriptions, and the shouts, and cries, and turmoil proceeding from them baffled all description.

In the centre of the group he saw a horse, held by two or three grooms by long ropes, rearing, kicking, and plunging like a wild beast, and near him a middle-aged, strong-built man, with a turban on his head, and his sleeves tucked up above his elbows, striking at the horse with a long courbatch, and cursing the animal, together with its sire, dam, and all its ancestry, in the most approved terms of Turkish abuse. As Hassan came forward, looking around in vain for any figure which he could conceive likely to be the Pasha, it happened that the person above-mentioned stopped a moment from his flogging and malediction to take breath ; so Hassan took

the opportunity of inquiring whether he could inform him where Delì Pasha was to be found.

‘And what may be your business with him, young man?’ said he, turning towards Hassan a face in which heat, anger, and good-humour were strangely blended.

‘I have a letter for him from Hadji Ismael, the merchant,’ replied Hassan.

‘Where is the letter?’ said the speaker.

‘It is here,’ said our hero, producing it from his girdle; ‘and I wish to deliver it to the Pasha in person, if you will tell me where I can find him.’

‘Let me see the address,’ said the strange man with the bare arm. Hassan handed it to him, and as he cast his eye on the outer seal he said—

‘Why this is not the seal of Hadji Ismael, it is that of the Viceroy;’ and he was proceeding leisurely to open it when Hassan snatched it from him, saying—

‘How dare you open it. I must deliver it unopened into the Pasha’s own hands.’

‘Why, you young hot-blood,’ said the other, holding out his two large muscular hands, ‘whose hands are these if they are not Delì Pasha’s?’

‘Is it so, indeed?’ said Hassan, in some con-

fusion. 'I was not aware that I was speaking to his Excellency.'

'There is no harm done, boy,' said the Pasha, smiling good-humouredly. 'You did not expect to see his Excellency with his arms bare, and a courbatch in his hand. Now that you know me, give me the letter.'

Taking it from the youth's hand he read it carefully, stopping every now and then to give a scrutinizing glance at the bearer, and when he came to the postscript added by the Viceroy's order, he laughed aloud till the tears stood in his eyes.

'By my father's beard!' he said, 'all will soon be mad in this house. Mohammed Ali sends you to me, saying that you are as mad as myself; and it is only yesterday that Ibrahim Pasha sent me that cursed horse, telling me that *it* was as mad as myself. If the father's statement prove as true as the son's, you must be mad indeed, for such a devil I never beheld.'

'Devil,' said Hassan, looking at the furious and struggling animal with unrepressed admiration; 'he seems to me beautiful as an angel.'

'You say true,' replied Delì Pasha, 'his form is perfect; and Ibrahim brought him away as a colt from the Wahabees; he is of pure Kohèil

blood ; but Shèitan* is his name, and Shèitan is his nature, nothing can tame him ; he has nearly killed two of Ibrahim Pasha's grooms, and now he sends the animal to me as a present, telling me that it is just like myself.'

'If he be a Kohèil,' said Hassan, 'he will never be tamed by such means as I saw your Excellency using when I came into the court-yard.'

'You speak boldly, youngster,' said the choleric Pasha with a frown. 'Do you think that, with my beard beginning to turn grey, I do not know how to tame an unruly horse?'

'I speak boldly, Excellency, because I speak truly, not from any wish to offend. Does Ibrahim Pasha know your Excellency well?'

'Wallàhi ! (by Allah) I believe you he does ; we have marched together, bivouacked together, fought together for many years.'

'Then,' said Hassan, 'as his Highness has likened your Excellency to that horse, permit your servant to ask you, if you were in an angry and fretful mood, and any one were to attempt to haul at you with ropes, and strike you with a courbatch, in order to tame *you*, how would he succeed?'

* Shèitan, Arabic form of 'Satan.'

‘Wallàhi ! I would cut his head off,’ exclaimed the Pasha, feeling mechanically for the sword which he had left behind him in the palace. ‘Do you think that you could mount him ?’

‘It is better not now,’ said Hassan, quietly.

‘Mount him !’ said a voice from behind ; ‘he is afraid to go near the horse.’

Hassan turned to look at the speaker, and saw a large, powerful man of about thirty-five years of age, to whose harsh features a deep scar on the cheek gave a still more forbidding appearance.

‘Silence, Osman Bey,’ said the Pasha ; ‘because the young man speaks his mind freely, you have no right to insinuate that he is afraid. What say you, Hassan ? What do you propose about the horse ?’

‘If your Excellency desires it,’ said Hassan, drawing himself up, and casting a look of contempt on Osman Bey, ‘I will mount the horse immediately, and he shall kill me or I will kill him ; but if you ask me what I would advise, I would say leave him alone now, his flank is panting, his eye blood-shot, no good can come from gentle usage now. Let him be taken back to the stable ; give orders that no one may tend or feed him but myself, and let me show him to your Excellency after two days are past.’

The Pasha was just about giving his consent, when Shèitan thought fit to settle the matter otherwise for himself. With an unexpected bound he broke the halter held by one groom, and rushing upon the other threw him to the ground, and grasping the unfortunate man by the middle, with his teeth shook him as a terrier does a rat.

None seemed desirous of approaching the infuriated animal, but Hassan, snatching a nabout (a long thick staff) from the hand of one of the bystanding servants, rushed to the spot, and striking the horse a severe blow on the nose obliged him to drop the sàis, who was no sooner released than he crawled away on all fours, and placed himself behind his protector.

Shèitan seemed resolved that day to be worthy of his name, for no sooner did he see Hassan standing before him, than he ran furiously at him with open mouth, with the intention of worrying him, as he had done the sàis, but Hassan had watched him with too steady an eye to be taken unawares, and no sooner did the animal in furious career come within reach, than he dealt him a blow on the top of the head between the ears, with such force that the nabout was broken in half, and the horse stood still a moment, com-

pletely stunned and bewildered. That moment was not unimproved by Hassan, who vaulted lightly on his back, and sat waiting until the animal's senses fully returned, during which time he gathered up the halters hanging from the horse's head, and made therewith a sort of extempore bridle.

No sooner did Shèitan recover his senses, and become aware of the audacious rider on his back, than he began to rear, plunge, and perform the wildest gambols, in order to dislodge him ; but he might as well have tried by such means to dislodge the hair from his mane. Hassan sat like a centaur, and the savage animal, determined to get rid of him, reared bolt upright, and fell backwards ; but Hassan was prepared for this manœuvre, and sliding off on one side alighted on his feet, while the horse fell alone.

Hassan's blood was now up, and he determined to subdue his enemy by force. Giving the horse several severe blows with the broken nabout which he still held in his hand, he forced the animal to rise, and just as it was gaining his feet jumped once more on its back.

'Aferin ! aferin !' (bravo ! bravo !) shouted the old Pasha, at the top of his voice, as the infuriated horse once more commenced its wild career, bearing its immovable and relentless

rider. The large area in which this scene took place was shut in by the house in front, by high walls on the two sides, one of which divided the outer house from the interior or harem, and at the further end was a lower wall, between five and six feet high, which divided it from another large court beyond, in which were the Pasha's stables. Shèitan, goaded to madness by his vain efforts to get rid of his merciless rider, now rushed with full speed towards the stable court. To stop him with that halter bridle was impossible, so, instead of attempting it, Hassan gave him his head, shouted aloud his wild Arab-cry, and, to the surprise of the bystanders, horse and man cleared the wall, and alighted in safety on the other side. Whether it were owing to the tremendous exertion that he had made, or to the concussion on alighting on hard ground after so unwonted a leap, Shèitan was no sooner over the wall than he stopped, trembling and panting.

Hassan allowed the affrighted animal a few moments to recover its breath, and then began to canter it round the stable-yard. 'Now, friend Shèitan,' he said, 'thou hast come over this wall once to please thyself, thou must go over it again to please me.' So saying, he again urged the

horse to full speed with heel and stick, and charging the wall with the same success as before, galloped him to the spot where Delì Pasha and his followers stood. There, without difficulty, he pulled up, and the foaming, panting sides of the exhausted steed sufficiently proved that he was subdued.

‘That will do for the first lesson,’ said Hassan, good-humouredly, patting the neck of Shèitan. ‘To-morrow we shall know each other better.’

Old Delì Pasha was so delighted with Hassan’s performance that he could scarcely find words to express himself.

‘See your horse safe in the stable,’ he said; ‘give your own orders about him, and then come up to me in the salamlik;* I have much to say to you.’ Turning to the Mirakhor, or head of the stable, he added—‘Give him a good sàis, and see that his orders about Shèitan are punctually obeyed.’

On inquiry, Hassan found that the sàis who had been seized by the horse had not been injured, as the teeth had only caught his outer clothes and

* Salamlik is a reception-room, in houses of Turkish construction, generally on the first floor, and in the centre of the building.

his broad girdle. This same sàis was the one who habitually fed Shèitan in the stable, and Hassan now accompanied him thither, telling him to walk the horse about for an hour, but to give it neither water nor barley till his return ; to ensure his fidelity Hassan slipped a few piasters into the man's hand, and returned towards the house to present himself to his new patron.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE INTERIOR OF DELÌ PASHA'S HAREM—HASSAN ENTERS
UPON HIS NEW DUTIES.

WE must now change the scene to the interior or harem of Delì Pasha's palace, which, as we have before said, was separated by a high wall from the exterior building. There was, however, a private door pierced in the wall, by means of which the Pasha could pass from his salamlík to his harem, which door was, as usual in Turkish houses, guarded by several stout eunuchs, who relieved each other on guard day and night. One wing of the harem was assigned to the Pasha's two wives, and their attendants, while the other was assigned to his only daughter, Amina, whose mother had died in her infancy, her place being now supplied by a middle-aged Turkish lady, named Fatimeh Khanum, who enjoyed the title and authority of Kiahia, or Chief of the Harem.

All the Pasha's best affections were centred in his daughter Amina, and indeed she was one of whom any father might be proud; she was about sixteen years of age, and though her figure

was rather above the average height, it was so beautifully formed, and rounded in such exquisite proportions, that every movement, every change of posture, was a varied though unstudied grace.

Her face was one of those which defy the poet's description, or the portraiture of the artist, for although every perfect and lovely feature might be separately described, neither pen nor pencil could depict their harmony of expression, nor the deep lustre of those large liquid eyes, whose fringes, when she cast them down, trembled on the border of her downy cheek.

Her beauty was already so celebrated in Cairo, that she was more generally known by the name of Nejmet-es-Sabah* than by her own. Many suitors among the highest of the Beys and Pashas had demanded her in marriage, but she was so happy with her father, and he loved her with such intense affection, that he had never yet been able to make up his mind to part with her. That he spoilt her by indulging her in every whim and caprice is certain, and yet she was not spoilt, partly owing to the gentleness of her own disposition, and partly owing to the care which Fatimeh Khanum, who was an unusually sensible

* Nejmet-es-Sabah—'Morning Star.'

and well-informed woman, had taken in her education.

From the latticed window in her boudoir Amina had witnessed the whole of the scene described in the last chapter, and, clapping her hands together with excitement, she had called Fatimeh to her side.

‘Fatimeh,’ she cried, ‘who is that strange youth, taller by the head than all the others?’

‘I know not, my child,’ said Fatimeh. ‘I have never seen him before.’

‘Oh, the wild horse will kill him,’ said Amina, with a half-suppressed shriek, as she saw the horse rear and fall backwards. ‘No, he is on it again, and unhurt,’ she cried, again clapping her hands together for joy. Another half scream burst from her as she saw the wild horse and horseman clear the wall, and again when he repeated the same perilous leap.

Amina often sat behind the lattice of her window and amused herself by looking at her father’s retainers when playing the jereed, and, though herself invisible to them, she knew many of them by name, and almost all by sight.

‘Oh, Fatimeh,’ she cried, ‘when you go down stairs do not forget to make one of the slaves inquire who is that strange youth. We never

saw such a horseman, did we, Fatimeh ? and then he has such a——’ Amina paused, and blushed a little.

‘ You were going to say such a handsome face and figure,’ said Fatimeh, smiling. ‘ I dare say he is a new Mameluke of your father’s, but I will find out and tell you who he is this evening,’

They then withdrew into the outer apartment, where Amina was in the habit of receiving her lady guests, and resumed the work which the noise made by the wild horse had interrupted.

Amina was making a beautiful embroidered purse for her father, and Fatimeh arranging some ornament of her favourite pupil’s dress, when a slave entered, and said that the Pasha required Fatimeh Khanum’s presence in the salamlik. Throwing her veil over her head, that lady immediately obeyed the summons.

The Pasha was alone, having ordered his attendants to withdraw.

‘ How is my Amina, my Morning Star, to-day ?’ he exclaimed, as soon as she entered.

‘ Praise be to Allah, she is well, and her fingers are even now employed on a purse for your Excellency.’

‘ The blessing of Allah be upon her,’ said the Pasha ; ‘ she is my heart’s delight. Inshallah !

when I have finished the business now in hand I will come to her. Tell her that I will sup with her this evening.' He then proceeded to inform her that he had been appointed by the Viceroy Governor of Siout, in Upper Egypt, and that in a few weeks he should take his departure, with all his family, to his new post. After giving her this information, he proceeded to discuss with her the arrangements which it might be advisable to make for the conveyance of his daughter, and for the other ladies of his harem.

While this discussion was going on, Hassan, after seeing Shèitan secure in the stable, had returned to the house, and inquired where he might find the Pasha.

'He is upstairs, in the salamlik,' said the young Mameluke whom he addressed. 'You will find him in the large room at the end of the passage on your right; he has dismissed us from attendance, but he has asked twice for you; better that you make haste; Delì Pasha does not like to wait.'

Hassan rapidly mounted the stairs, and, following the direction he had received, ran rather than walked along the dimly-lighted passage which led to the Pasha's room. Just as he reached the end, and was about to enter, he encountered a woman

coming out, and the concussion was such that she must inevitably have fallen had he not caught and supported her in his arms. As it was, the shock was such that it displaced her veil, and for a few seconds she was unable to speak. Hassan saw that it was a middle-aged woman, who still retained traces of early beauty; it was indeed no other than our friend Fatimeh Khanum retiring from her interview with the Pasha.

‘I hope you are not much hurt, lady,’ said he, in a tone of respectful solicitude, and depositing her gently on a stone seat at the side of the passage.

‘Not hurt,’ she replied, with difficulty regaining her breath, ‘but very much frightened.’

‘I cannot forgive myself for being so careless,’ he continued; ‘but I was in haste to obey the Pasha’s summons. I hope you forgive me; you can be sure I meant no rudeness to you.’

‘I believe it, young Aga,’ she replied, with a good-natured smile, fixing her eyes involuntarily on the open and animated countenance before her. ‘I am recovered now,’ she continued; ‘you had better go in to the Pasha, who is waiting for you.’

Hassan, after again saluting her respectfully, left her, and entered the Pasha’s room.

‘ You have not been very quick in obeying our summons,’ said the latter, with a slight frown on his brow.

Hassan explained the accident by which he had been detained in the passage.

‘ What !’ he cried, bursting out into a fit of laughter, ‘ so you nearly knocked down our poor Kiahia Khanum, did you? I am glad she was not hurt. She is a good, kind-hearted soul. Now come here, Hassan, and tell me if you know anything of the postscript added by Mohammed Ali’s order to the merchant’s letter ?’

‘ Nothing,’ replied Hassan. ‘ His Highness gave his orders in a whisper to the interpreter.’

‘ Well, it is written in this letter that I am to pay you ten purses (50*l.*), and I shall order the money to be given to you this evening.’

The Pasha then made Hassan give him an account of his interview with the Viceroy, and of his affray with the Government kawàss on the canal, at which latter Delì Pasha laughed heartily; he then continued—“ Hadji Ismael speaks so highly of you in his letter, that I propose at once to offer you the vacant post of Khaznadar (treasurer) in this house. My Khazneh (treasury) is not very full, and will not occupy you much, so I shall expect you to assist in the purchase

of horses which I am making for Ibrahim Pasha.'

Hassan stepped forward, and having placed the edge of the Pasha's pelisse to his forehead, in token of acknowledgment, retired from the room.

'I like that young giant,' said Delì Pasha to himself, as Hassan withdrew. 'His manners are so quiet, and his face so prepossessing, but there is the devil in his eye when his blood is roused, as I saw this morning.'

Hassan was no sooner alone than he remembered the letter given him by his old friend Mohammed Aga, in Alexandria, to Ahmed Aga, Delì Pasha's master of the horse, and hearing that he had gone to the stables, followed and rejoined him. Ahmed Aga, who had been an admiring spectator of Hassan's performance with Shèitan, was already prepossessed in his favour, and when he read the letter which his old friend Mohammed Aga's partiality had dictated, he welcomed Hassan with great cordiality; and as Ahmed himself was a man of open, honest countenance, and sterling good qualities, they were disposed to like each other from the very first.

Hassan having communicated to his new friend

that he had just received the appointment of Khaznadar, the latter exclaimed—

‘Mashallah ! that is a good beginning, but the post is not so agreeable as you might think ; for it brings you into constant collision with Osman Bey, the wakeel, who has charge of all Delî Pasha’s lands and property. He is a spiteful, jealous, and dangerous man. I fear he has taken a dislike to you already.’

‘To me!’ said Hassan, in surprise. ‘What can I have done to offend him?’

‘You have offended him mortally by riding that horse, Shèitan, which he was unable to mount ; and as he is a good horseman, and very proud of his horsemanship, he is very angry at your having subdued that which he described this morning to the Pasha as a wild beast, perfectly untameable.’

‘If he is spiteful against me on such grounds as those,’ said Hassan, smiling, ‘I cannot help myself. I shall do my duty, and not trouble myself about his spite.’

Ahmed Aga shook his head, as if Osman Bey were not a pleasant subject to speak upon.

‘Come,’ he said, ‘let us go into the house. As Khaznadar you are entitled to a separate room ; a privilege enjoyed by none of the Mamelukes.’

CHAPTER XIV.

HASSAN SEES WHAT HE HAS LONG DREAMT OF—HE MAKES FRIENDS WITH ‘SHEITAN,’ AND HAS A NARROW ESCAPE FROM BEING SHOT.

WE left Fatimeh Khanum recovering from the shock occasioned by running against Hassan in the passage. After a few minutes she pursued her way to the private door leading to the harem, where she was at once admitted by the eunuchs on guard.

No sooner had the good lady reached Amina’s apartment than she threw herself down on a divan in the corner, and the quick eyes of her pupil soon discovered that she had been, and indeed still was, labouring under some violent agitation.

‘What has happened, my dear Fatimeh?’ said Amina, seating herself beside her governess. ‘What has agitated you thus?’

Fatimeh then related to her pupil her accidental *rencontre* with Hassan in the passage, and that he was the same youth whom they had seen from the window riding the wild horse.

‘He carried me so gently,’ she continued, ‘to a seat, and he was so kind in inquiring whether I

was hurt, and his manner was so respectful, so unlike those young Mamelukes, that I could not take my eyes off him; I felt as if I were bewitched.'

'Oh!' cried Amina, clapping her little hands together; 'Fatimeh Khanum, my wise monitress, has fallen in love with the young stranger.'

'My dear child,' replied Fatimeh, 'the love you speak of has been dead within me for many years, and can never be revived; and that which frightens me so much is, that I cannot account for the agitation into which I was thrown by his looks and his voice, otherwise than by saying that I must have been bewitched.' And here the good lady began to recite some verses from the Koran, as a charm against the Evil Eye, and to count the beads of her rosary.* Having performed this counter-charm against witchery, the good dame then proceeded to inform her pupil of their approaching change of residence, and departure for Siout, and also of her father's intention to sup with her.

'Oh!' cried the light-hearted Amina, 'I will

* The rosary here alluded to (called in Arabic, Tashbih) is a string of beads, generally one hundred in number, carried by the greater part of Moslems of the upper and middling classes: they are used as 'omens,' 'counter-charms,' &c.

prepare him a dish of kadaif* with my own hands. He says that no one can make it so well as I do.' So saying, she bounded away to give the requisite orders to her female slaves.

While these preparations were going forward, Hassan, aided by his new friend, Ahmed Aga, had found a vacant room on the second floor, which was forthwith appropriated to his use, and his box and saddle-bags were immediately transported thither. As he might, in his new capacity of Khaznadar, be called upon to take charge of sums of money belonging to Delì Pasha, he desired that a strong lock might be put on the door, of which he proposed to keep the key about his person. There was not much fear of thieves coming in at the window, as the only aperture for the admission of light or air was in the side-wall of the house, forty or fifty feet from the ground, and eight or ten feet above the floor of Hassan's room. The remainder of the day, with the exception of a visit made to Shèitan, Hassan spent with Ahmed Aga, who gave him many useful hints as to the character of his new chief. It proved to be very much what Hassan's observations would

* 'Kadaif,' a favourite Turkish dish, made of flour, honey, and other ingredients.

have led him to surmise—hasty, impetuous, and choleric, but warm-hearted, and soon appeased.

The moon was high in the heavens when Hassan retired to his own room, where he busied himself in arranging his few moveables before throwing himself on his mattress to sleep. While thus engaged, a Turkish song, with the words of which he was perfectly familiar, caught his ear. The voice was evidently that of a female, and it was rich, low, and musical.

Hassan listened like one in a trance to that sweet sound, wafted into his room, he knew not whence, by the night-breeze. The song consisted of three stanzas, two of which the songstress completed, and then her fingers wandered over the strings of a lute, as if to recal the third to memory. Moved by an impulse which he could not restrain, Hassan took up the song, and in a low voice sung the concluding stanza. After this there was a profound silence, broken only by the distant barking of dogs and braying of donkeys, sounds which never cease day or night in Cairo, and Hassan fell asleep with the Turkish song on his lips.

He was up before sunrise, and went straight to the stables, where he hoped to find that Shèitan, having been kept all night without barley or

water, might be more disposed to cultivate acquaintance. Such, however, was not the case, for when he endeavoured to approach with sieve or bucket, the horse lay back its ears, and struggled with the heel ropes, endeavouring to kick at him.

‘Softly,’ said Hassan; ‘no more violence now, we shall soon be better friends;’ and, putting away the corn and the water, he contrived, with the assistance of his groom, to saddle and bridle him. Armed with a good courbatch, he mounted, and went out by a back gate, the horse fretting and plunging, but still evidently recognising his rider of yesterday.

Hassan gave him a good gallop of some ten miles over the desert, and brought him back much subdued to the stable. ‘Not a drop of water nor a grain of barley,’ said he to the sàis, ‘until he takes it out of my hand.’ So saying, he walked into the house, and went up to his own room, his thoughts ever reverting to the unseen songstress of yesterday evening. As he went along the passage leading to his room, his eye accidentally fell upon a small ladder, which appeared to have been lately used for whitewashing the upper wall and ceiling of the passage. A sudden idea struck him, and catching up the

ladder, he carried it into his own room, and after locking the door, by the help of the ladder he climbed up to the aperture which served as a window, and looked cautiously out.

Opposite him, at a distance of not more than eight or ten yards, he saw a latticed window, which he at once knew to belong to the harem portion of the palace, and he guessed that from that window must have come the strain which he had heard the preceding night. Hiding the ladder, or rather the steps under his bed, he went down to attend upon Delì Pasha, who received him with much kindness, and gave him several commissions connected with his new appointment. Having executed these with punctuality, and dined as on the preceding day with Ahmed, he retired to his own room, but not to sleep, for his imagination still fed upon the soft, musical voice of the night before, and he hoped that he might hear it again. Nor was he doomed to disappointment, for about two hours after sunset his ear again caught the same voice, singing, perhaps, in a lower tone, and a different air.

Gently placing his steps against the wall below the aperture, he mounted, and found that the sound proceeded, as he had expected, from the latticed window opposite. The moon shone full

upon it, though he was in the shade. He fancied that through the little diamond-shaped apertures in the lattice he could distinguish a female figure behind it. Holding his breath with anxiety, he remained for some time on the watch, when the fair songstress, having finished her lay, threw open the lattice, to look out for a few minutes at the moonlit scene.

Hassan gazed at the lovely apparition as if under a fascination. Her gorgeous black hair was falling in clusters over her neck and shoulders, veiling at the same time half of the arm on which she reposed her rounded and velvet cheek. Sometimes her large lustrous eyes were raised to the moon, as if asking some question of the skyey influences, and at others they dropped under the shadows of their long dark fringes.

‘Oh, my dream—my destiny,’ murmured Hassan to himself, ‘there she is—she of whom I have dreamt—she whom I have adored from my earliest youth—her picture has been long in my heart, but my eyes never saw it till now!’ In the excitement and agitation of the moment, he fell rather than descended to the ground, and throwing himself on his bed, gave vent to all the impetuous and long-suppressed impulses of his romantic passion. He had not remained there

many minutes ere the Turkish song of the preceding evening reached his ear, and the fair songstress, as before, paused at the conclusion of the second stanza. Moved by an impulse that he could not resist, Hassan caught up the air, and sang to it, with a voice trembling with agitation, the following lines:—

‘Thy name is unknown, yet thy image is in my heart;
Thine eyes have pierced me, and if thou show not mercy I die.’

Again he crept softly up the steps, and looked out; but the lattice was closed, and the fair vision had disappeared.

On the following morning Hassan was afoot before sunrise, and in walking across the space between the house and the stable, it occurred to him to turn round and reconnoitre the windows, in hopes of discovering the latticed window opposite to his own room; nor was the task difficult, for on carrying his eye along the wall that separated the outer palace from the harem, he easily recognised the window that he sought, in the upper story of the harem, which faced the quarter of the house in which his own room was situated, and which, being at the corner of the building, commanded a view of the space over which he was now walking, and this was the Meidàn,

where the Mamelukes and followers of the Pasha played at the jereed,* and other equestrian sports in vogue at the time.

His thoughts still bent upon the lovely vision of the preceding night, he reached the stable, and on his approaching and speaking to Shèitan, the horse turned round and looked at him, seemingly more desirous of receiving something from him than of kicking or biting him. 'So,' said Hassan, smiling, 'we shall be friends after all!' The half pail of water that he carried up to the horse's head was swallowed with every appearance of satisfaction, and Shèitan no longer disdained to eat the barley out of his hands. Allowing the horse only a few handfuls, Hassan gave him another canter over the desert, stopping every now and then to coax and caress him, and it was soon evident that all enmity was at an end. After his return he gave Shèitan his full meal of barley, and from that day they grew daily more and more intimate, until, at the end of a week,

* The game of the jereed is almost too familiar to the reading world to require description. It is a mimic fight, representing a combat with the spear or javelin. The jereed itself is a cane, much shorter than an ordinary spear, and is thrown like a javelin: sometimes they are strong and heavy, and, when wielded by a powerful arm, inflict, though blunt, a very serious injury.

the formerly vicious horse was as gentle as a lamb to him, and followed him like a dog.

During the first few days of his stay he was chiefly employed in examining the accounts of his predecessor, in which he received great assistance from his friend, Ahmed Aga, notwithstanding which assistance, the task was far from being easy, as the Pasha was himself very thoughtless and extravagant in all that regarded money, and the preceding Khaznadar had thought it his duty to follow in that respect his chief's example.

Meantime Hassan had formed the acquaintance of the chief eunuch of the harem—a venerable-looking negro, with a beard as white as snow, and the old man took pleasure in relating to so enthusiastic and intelligent a listener some of the stirring and tragical scenes that he had witnessed in the days of the Mameluke Beys and the French invasion, at which period he had himself been in the service of the famous Ibrahim Elfi Bey. Hassan had another motive in cultivating the acquaintance of Mansour Aga; namely, that, as the old man seemed to know something of the history of every influential family in Egypt, he hoped through him to find some clue to his own parentage.

Every evening, before retiring to rest, Hassan crept softly up to the aperture in the wall of his room; but the lattice was shut, and was in the shade, owing to the change in the position of the moon. Nevertheless, though he could see nothing, he remained there for a long time, with his cheek resting on his hand, and his eyes fixed upon the lattice, as if the insensible wood could feel or return his gaze.

Lovers are never very good calculators, and thus Hassan forgot that the same change in the position of the moon which had thrown the latticed window into the shade, had also thrown her beams full upon his own face, and that the tenant of the opposite room could now, while perfectly concealed herself, trace every emotion that passed over his expressive countenance.

Alas for seclusion! Alas for propriety!—but so it was. The lovely songstress, behind her latticed shield, now gazed in silence, night after night, on what was in her eyes the noblest face they had ever beheld; and when his longing and ardent gaze seemed to him to be arrested by that envious lattice, it fell in reality on the lustrous orbs and blushing cheeks of the lovely girl within, who, although concealed, trembled at her own audacity, and at the new emotions that agitated

her breast. Having waited for some time in the vain hope of seeing the tip of a finger, or a symptom of movement in the lattice, he descended to his room, having sung before he left the following verse, in a low voice :—

‘Oh, sleep! fall like dew on that rosebud’s eyelids;
Let her know in her dreams that Hassan’s heart is burnt
with her love.’

On the following day Hassan had gone into the city on some business entrusted to him by the Pasha, and on his return had just entered that part of the Frank quarter now called the Esbekiah, when his attention was attracted to a tumultuous noise at no great distance, occasioned apparently by some drunken Bashi-Bozouks.* He was about to pass on, when he heard his own name called aloud by a voice which he easily recognised as that of Mansour, the eunuch, ‘Help, Hassan, help—they will murder me!’

* The Crimean campaign has now made the name of these Bashi-Bozouks, or irregular cavalry, familiar to all Europe. In Egypt, at the date of our tale, they were mostly Albanians; and a more lawless set of ruffians than they were could not be found on earth. On some occasions their savage violence could not be controlled, even by the iron hand of Mohammed Ali. They would neither obey, nor leave the country, and he was compelled to bribe them to adopt the latter course, and also to have them escorted by regular troops beyond the frontier.

Snatching a heavy naboot from the hands of one of the fellahs standing by, Hassan rushed into the fray, and arrived just as one of the Bashi-Bozouks was dragging poor old Mansour off his mule by his snowy beard. A blow from Hassan's naboot on the fellow's shoulder made him let go his hold, and his arm dropped powerless by his side. His two companions (for the Bashi-Bozouks were three in number) now turned upon Hassan, and one of them, drawing a pistol from his belt, fired it as he advanced; fortunately for our hero, the ruffian's aim was unsteady, and the ball, passing through his sleeve, lodged in the shoulder of a boy who was an accidental spectator of the fray. The two then drew their swords, and rushed upon him together; but the clumsy drunkards were no match for the steady eye and powerful arm of Hassan. Parrying their first ill-directed thrusts, he struck first one and then the other over the head with the full weight of his club, and the contest was over; they both lay helpless on the ground.

Hassan then assisted the terrified eunuch to re-mount his mule, and the crowd was beginning to disperse, when the wali (or police-magistrate), who happened to be passing by, rode up, and inquired into the cause of the disturbance.

It was soon explained by Mansour, who was known to the wali, and as it was shown and confirmed by the bystanders that the Bashi-Bozouks had been the aggressors, the wali ordered them to be conveyed to their quarters, and delivered to their own officers. He then pursued his way, as did Mansour, after cordially thanking Hassan for his timely assistance.

Hassan was just returning to the spot where he had left his horse under the care of the sàis, when his eye fell upon the unfortunate boy whose shoulder had received the pistol-ball aimed at himself. On approaching to see whether he were seriously hurt, Hassan saw that he looked faint from exhaustion, and that his vest was stained with blood. Drawing near to examine the wound, he inquired whether he felt much pain; the poor boy, whose countenance was extremely prepossessing and intelligent, answered only with a faint murmur, pointing at the same time to his mouth.

‘The ball cannot have wounded you both in the shoulder and the mouth,’ said Hassan. The sufferer shook his head, and again pointed to his mouth. Then Hassan understood that he was dumb.

‘Poor child!’ said Hassan, compassionately;

‘I have been the cause of thy wound. I cannot leave thee here to suffer—perhaps to die. Where is thy home?’

A melancholy shake of the head was the only answer.

‘Hast no parents?’—Again the same reply.

Hassan’s mind was now made up. Tearing a piece of linen off the edge of his shirt, he stanchèd with it the blood still flowing from the boy’s shoulder, and binding a handkerchief over the wound, he lifted the sufferer gently in his arms; then placing him on his horse, and having desired the groom to go immediately for the Italian surgeon who attended Delì Pasha’s family, he walked slowly home, supporting the wounded boy on the saddle.

CHAPTER XV.

HOW MANSOUR, THE EUNUCH, INADVERTENTLY POKED A FIRE WHICH HE OUGHT TO HAVE EXTINGUISHED—HASSAN LEARNS TO TALK WITH HIS FINGERS, AND GIVES A SPECIMEN OF HIS SKILL AT THE GAME OF THE JEREED WHICH THREATENS DANGEROUS CONSEQUENCES TO HIMSELF.

MANSOUR, the eunuch, after being so opportunely rescued by Hassan, pursued his way with all speed to Delì Pasha's harem, and went up to give to the Lady Amina an account of the commission which he had been executing for her in Cairo.

After he had produced the gold thread which he had purchased for the completion of the purse which Amina was working for her father, the young lady remarked in his countenance the traces of recent agitation, and inquired the cause of it; the old man then proceeded to relate to her his adventure with the Bashi-Bozouks and his timely rescue by Hassan. In speaking of the latter he launched forth into the highest praises of his courage and prowess, as well as the kindness of his nature and disposition.

Had the room not been darkened by curtains,

and the old man's eyesight not been somewhat dimmed by age, he could not have failed to notice the tell-tale blood rush to the cheeks and temples of Amina as she heard these encomiums on one whom she knew to be the same whom she had seen from her lattice, and whose voice had taken up her song; nor could she doubt from the expression which he had used, and from the deep and earnest gaze which he had fixed upon her lattice, that she was herself the object of his romantic attachment.

Repressing her emotions with a slyness which is one of the earliest lessons that Love teaches to his votaries, she asked Mansour, in a tone of seeming indifference, who this new follower of her father's might be, and what his rank and parentage.

To these inquiries Mansour was unable to give her any satisfactory answer. He had heard that some mystery hung over Hassan's birth, and all that he knew was that his form was a model of strength and activity, that as a horseman he was unequalled, that from his good humour and obliging disposition he was already a great favourite in the house, and that Delì Pasha entertained so high an opinion of him as to give him the appointment of Khaznadar.

Little did the aged eunuch think that every

word which he uttered was adding fuel to the fire already kindled in Amina's sensitive breast, and that while she sat with downcast eyes and fingers busily employed on her purse, her ear was greedily drinking in every word that he uttered in praise of Hassan, and her little heart was beating against her side with throbs so violent that she feared Mansour must hear them. Her secret was, however, safe for the present, and the old eunuch, changing the conversation, said—

‘Have you heard that on the day after to-morrow there is to be a grand match at the jereed in the court-yard? The Kiahia Pasha is coming with some of his golams, and they will take a part in the game.’

‘No,’ replied Amina; ‘I had not yet heard of it. Are you sure if it is to be the day after to-morrow?’

‘Yes; I was told so even now as I came in by Ahmed the mirakhor; I hope that some of those brought by the Kiahia will be strong and skilful, so as to make head against that tyrannical, ill-natured Osman Bey, our Pasha's wakeel. Here we have no one who can contend with him; I dislike him,’ added the old eunuch, lowering his voice, ‘but, to say the truth, I have not seen his match at the jereed.’

‘Will not the young stranger whom you spoke of?’ said Amina, hesitating to mention the name.

‘Hassan?’ said Mansour.

‘Yes, Hassan; will not he play at the jereed, and may he not be a match for Osman?’

‘I doubt it,’ replied Mansour, shaking his head; ‘notwithstanding his strength, activity, and horsemanship, he is but a youth, and he can scarcely have had opportunity for acquiring the skill and experience requisite for complete proficiency in this game.’

A bright ray shone in Amina’s eye, and she was about to utter some fervent wish or exclamation, but she checked herself, and bent her head again in silence over her work.

While this conversation was passing between these two, Hassan had brought the wounded boy to the house, where he had carried him gently upstairs, and deposited the sufferer on his own bed; shortly afterwards the surgeon arrived, and having examined the wound, he pronounced, to Hassan’s great satisfaction, that the ball had passed clean through the fleshy part of the arm, just below the shoulder, without injuring any bone or ligament, and the patient was only suffering from loss of blood.

Having dressed the wound, he said—‘Let him

have rest and light wholesome food ; in a few days he will be well.' The doctor then took his leave, and Hassan, by the assistance of his friend Ahmed Aga, found a small empty room, not far from his own, in which he placed a bed, and, having conveyed thither his patient, went below in order to find some refreshing draught, of which the boy seemed much in need. In a few minutes he returned with a cool lemonade, and having drunk it, the dumb boy looked up in his face, tears of gratitude standing in his eyes.

Hassan was very desirous to ascertain something of the condition and history of his helpless companion, who began to converse with him by rapid movements of his slight and delicate fingers. This, however, being a sealed alphabet to our hero, he shook his head in token that he did not understand a syllable ; the boy then began with his right (fortunately it was his unwounded hand) to imitate writing with a pen on paper.

' Oh, you can read and write, can you ?' said Hassan. The boy nodded his head. Hassan then went down to his office below, and soon returned, bringing with him an inkstand, a reed, and some paper. We will not weary the reader by recording in detail the written conversation that followed. The result was that Hassan learned that the boy's

name was Murad, that like himself he was an orphan, ignorant of his parentage; that as a child he had been in the house of a Captain of Bashi-Bozouks, who one day, in a fit of drunken fury, had cut off more than half of the poor child's tongue, owing to some hasty word that had escaped him; that having been kicked out of the Captain's house, he had been kindly treated by one of the Mollahs attached to the Mosque El-Azhar,* where he had remained for several years, learning to read and write, and fed from the eleemosynary funds of that institution, and that for the last two years he had picked up a precarious subsistence by carrying letters and parcels all over the town. He ended his artless tale by saying that everybody in Cairo knew him, and he knew everybody.

While this conversation in writing was still passing, Hassan received a summons from Deli

* The Mosque El-Azhar is one of the largest, wealthiest, and most celebrated in Cairo. Although devoid of all pretensions to architectural beauty, within its precincts is a college for the instruction of youth; but little is taught beyond reading the Koran, and the commentators thereon, writing, and the first rudiments of arithmetic. To the children of the poorer classes the instruction is gratuitous, and even food and lodging are provided from the funds of the endowment. Its revenues were much curtailed by Mohammed Ali.

Pasha, whom he found in his salamlik on the first floor.

‘Hassan,’ said the Pasha, ‘there are thirty horses just arrived, sent by an agent in my employ, for the service of a cavalry regiment which the Viceroy has ordered to be raised for Upper Egypt; I wish you to examine and try them, and cast any that you think unfit for the work. When you have seen them, bring me your report.’

Hassan replied, ‘Upon my head be it,’ and was leaving the room, when Delì Pasha called him back, and asked him for an account of what had happened between his chief eunuch and the Bashi-Bozouks, a rumour of which had already reached him. Hassan recounted briefly what he had seen, passing over his own services as lightly as possible, and concluded by mentioning the hurt of poor little Murad, and of his being now under the Pasha’s roof.

‘Poor child!’ said Delì Pasha, ‘I have heard something of his history; after the massacre of the Mameluke Beys he was found in a house that belonged to one of them, and afterwards fell into the hands of one of those Albanian savages, who cut out his tongue. I have often seen the little boy in the streets, and I pity him much; you may

keep him, and take care of him as long as you please, and while he remains I will give orders that he has his regular allowance sent from the kitchen.'

Hassan thanked the Pasha for his kindness, and was about to leave the room, when he was again called back by his chief, who said—

'In describing your interference to rescue old Mansour, you made little mention of yourself, but it seems clear that you must have knocked down three of these fellows with the naboot: did you hit them very hard,—do you think any of them are killed?'

'I think not,' said Hassan, quietly; 'as one had fired a pistol, and the two others used their swords, I was obliged in self-defence to strike rather quick and hard, but I did not use all my strength, nor endeavour to do more than prevent them from doing further mischief at the time; the rascals have thick skulls, which will stand many a tap from a naboot before they break.'

'Well, Inshallah! may you not have killed any of them,' said the Pasha, 'for they are a revengeful race, and would never rest till they had your blood by fair means or foul; when you go out, keep a sharp eye upon any stray parties of them whom you may meet.'

Hassan thanked the Pasha for his advice, and spent the remainder of the day in trying and examining the horses sent for approval, twenty-five of which he retained, and cast the remainder. On the following morning he went out before sunrise to the horse-market, and selected five, which completed the number required for the present: they were forthwith sent on to the appointed depôt, and Hassan was ordered to write to Ibrahim Pasha's agent to inquire whether any more were to be provided. When he brought this letter to his chief to be sealed, the latter abruptly asked him—

‘Have you ever played the jereed?’

‘Often,’ replied Hassan; ‘we had a game somewhat similar when I was a boy, among the Bedouins, and afterwards I practised it now and then among the Mamelukes of some of the Beys and Pashas in Alexandria.’

‘I am glad of that,’ said Delî Pasha; ‘to-morrow, Inshallah, there is to be a match in our court-yard, and Kiahia Pasha is coming with some of his Mamelukes;—I have given it up myself,’ he added, with a sigh, ‘but I love to look at it still.’

Hassan spent the greater part of the afternoon with his little patient, conversing by notes which

they handed one to the other. This, however, was too slow a process to satisfy the quick and intelligent boy, who proposed to teach his protector the alphabet which he had either learnt or invented with his fingers ; Hassan assented, and studied his lesson with so much assiduity that, after a short time, to the great delight of little Murad, they were able to converse together without the aid of pen and paper.

On the following morning all the house was astir early, making preparations for the jereed-playing, and for the reception of the Kiahia Pasha, who had written to ask whether he might bring with him some English visitors, recommended to him by the Viceroy, and who were anxious to see the Oriental tournament. To this Delì Pasha had replied by an hospitable affirmative, and while refreshments, flowers, and sherbets were heaped upon a table in the large saloon, carpets and sofas were spread along the verandah which ran along the whole back part of the house, overlooking the large area before described, where the games were to take place.

At the appointed hour the Kiahia arrived in great state, that is, on horseback, with a gay and numerous retinue—for in those days there was only one carriage in Cairo, that belonging to the

Viceroy—immediately following them came the whole party of the Thorpes, who were, as the reader has doubtless perceived, the strangers in whose favour the Kiahia had asked for an invitation.

Delì Pasha welcomed them with his accustomed frank hospitality, and Hassan, who was in attendance on him, received and returned the friendly salutations of all the party. Demetri's talents were now called into exercise, and as he had not the piercing eye of the Viceroy fixed upon him, he gave a loose to his fancy in ornamenting the phrases he was called upon to translate, with all manner of Oriental tropes and figures. Hassan detected his additions and embellishments, but he only smiled, and made no comment on them.

After partaking of some refreshment, and the usual ceremony of pipes and coffee had been duly observed, Delì Pasha led his guests to the verandah, placing the Kiahia in the centre, in the seat of honour, and left the others to arrange their seats according to their own fancy and convenience; he himself sat between Emily and her mother, and as M. Müller was next to the former, the Pasha was thus able to communicate with her without the assistance of Demetri.

‘Let the games begin,’ shouted Delì Pasha to

Ahmed Aga, his mirakhor, and in a moment all was hurry and confusion in the space below ; the Mamelukes of the Kiahia Pasha first entered the arena, they were well mounted and superbly dressed ; after them poured in those of Delì Pasha, most of them wild youths, but admirable horsemen, and well skilled in the games about to be played.

Immediately in front of the verandah was a thick post or column of wood, on the top of which was placed a human head cut out of wood, not unlike those on which European barbers model wigs. The first exercise for the horsemen was to ride past this head at full speed and carry it off with the point of the lance. Just as the games were about to commence, Delì Pasha noticed that Hassan was standing in an attitude of abstraction a few yards off, at the back of the verandah.

‘ Why, Hassan, are you not going to play ?’ said the Pasha, good-humouredly ; ‘ I thought you had said you were fond of the exercise.’

‘ If your Excellency has no need of my service here,’ replied Hassan, ‘ I will join the game.’

‘ Go, my lad,’ said the Pasha ; ‘ but do not ride that ungovernable Shèitan, or his mad freaks will get you into trouble.’

‘ Shèitan is quiet and well-behaved now,’ re-

plied Hassan ; ‘ your Excellency will see that he is not bad at the jereed.’

The game began, and the Mamelukes galloped in succession at the wooden head with their long spears, some carrying it off, and the greater number missing it ; and while they were thus employed Hassan entered the arena from the stable entrance, mounted on Shèitan. Whether it was that the latter had been left unexercised the preceding day, or that he was excited by the crowd and the galloping and neighing of strange horses, certain it is that his behaviour seemed much more to justify Delì Pasha’s caution than Hassan’s good report. He reared, he plunged, he shook his long mane, and every now and then he bounded into the air as if maddened by anger or excitement. Hassan sat as easy and unconcerned as if he had been in an arm-chair, and his usual good-natured smile played over his lips, as he patted the horse’s neck, and said—

‘ Shèitan, you are playful this morning.’

‘ Mashallah ! what a noble horseman is that Mameluke of yours !’ exclaimed the Kiahia, addressing Delì Pasha ; ‘ where is he from ?’

‘ He is not a Mameluke,’ replied Delì Pasha, ‘ he is my khaznadar, lately arrived ; he was brought up among the Bedouins ; in the room he

is as quiet and still as a cat, but on a horse he is as mad as the animal he is now riding,' and as he spoke he shouted aloud to Hassan to come under the verandah.

In a second Hassan's stirrup touched the flank of Shèitan, who bounded into the air, and then came at full speed to within a few yards of the house, when he stopped dead short, while Hassan looked up to inquire the orders of his chief.

'Hassan,' said Delì Pasha, 'I told you that it would be impossible for you to play at these games on the back of that wild, unruly beast; had you not better change it for one more manageable? You may ride one of mine if you will.'

'Bakkalum (we shall see), my lord,' was Hassan's only reply, and wheeling his horse, he charged in full career at the head on the post. Lowering his lance as he approached, he struck the head so full in the centre that the point of the lance entered several inches into the wood, and there it remained, while Hassan, galloping round the arena, came again under the verandah, and, holding up his lance, presented the head, still fixed on it, to Delì Pasha.

'Aferin—bravo, bravo, my son!' said the old Pasha, and it was echoed by many a surrounding voice.

The post was now taken away, and the lists were prepared for the jereed. The Mamelukes divided themselves into parties preparatory to the mimic fight, which was indeed nothing more than a succession or variety of single combats. In the centre of the arena were a score of active sàises, or grooms on foot, whose duty it was to pick up the jereeds* as they fell, and hand them to the mounted combatants.

It was at this moment that Osman Bey, Delî Pasha's wakeel, who thought the preceding game beneath his dignity, entered the arena, followed by several of his Mamelukes. He was dressed in a costume which, although not showy, was rich, and well calculated to show off the proportions of his strong and muscular figure; he was mounted on a grey Arab, which, for the first two years of its life, had been fed on camels' milk in the deserts of the Nejd, and, though not remarkable for size, was

* The jereed is sometimes made of reeds or canes, but more frequently of palm-sticks cut in the form of a javelin, with a blunted point. They vary much in weight; and a heavy jereed thrown by a vigorous arm is capable of giving a very severe, sometimes a dangerous bruise; for this reason, aiming at the face or head is strictly prohibited in this game, though it necessarily happens in so wild a sport, carried on with reckless riders and horses at full speed, that the head and face often receive a serious hurt.

compactly and beautifully proportioned. Osman Aga, though not a graceful rider, was a practised horseman, firm in the saddle, strong in the arm, and proud of the reputation that he had gained in the mimic combats of the jereed. With a grave salute to the Kïahia and Delî Pasha, he took his place at the centre of one side of the area, and the game began.

While Osman Bey and the elder Mamelukes engaged each other in a succession of these trials of skill and speed, Hassan hovered on the outskirts of the combatants, at some distance from the house, apparently engaged in repelling the attacks of half-a-dozen of the youngest of the Mamelukes of Delî Pasha's household. He was a general favourite with these lads, for whom he had on all occasions a kind word and a good-humoured smile, and the merry youngsters well knew that however they might pursue and torment him with their jereeds, they had no reason to fear his putting out his strength to injure them in repelling their attacks; thus one would call out to him, 'Hassan! Hassan!' and charge him at full speed on the right, and scarcely had he time to catch or avoid the jereed, ere another attacked him with similar shouts on the left; some of them struck him more than one smart

blow on the shoulder with a jereed, and they shouted and laughed, while Hassan joined in their merriment.

But it was not only to play with these merry youths that Hassan had withdrawn to a part of the ground at some distance from the place where the older combatants were engaged. His quick eye, which ever and anon roved to a certain lattice high up in the adjoining building, had detected that it was partially opened, and revealed to him half of the lovely face ever in his thoughts, peeping out upon the arena ; he believed that those eyes followed his movements, and he availed himself of every opportunity, when he could do so unnoticed, to cast an upward glance to meet them ; but he was not destined to remain long without more serious employment, for several of the older and more experienced of the combatants in turn challenged him, by shouting his name and charging him at full speed. The first was his friend, Ahmed Aga, whose jereed passed close over his back without touching him.

Hassan pursued him in turn, and pretending to use much force, struck him lightly on the shoulder ; next he was charged by the chief of the Kiahia Pasha's Mamelukes, a very handsome Georgian, and the only one who had this day in-

terchanged several bouts with Osman Bey with nearly equal success.

Hassan prepared for this encounter with more caution. On the charge of his opponent he fled (as is the custom of the game) at full speed, looking back over his shoulder. The Georgian threw his jereed with faultless aim, when Hassan, instead of avoiding, caught it in the air, and, wheeling suddenly, pursued the Georgian, and struck him on the back with his own jereed. This feat, which is one of the most difficult of those practised in the game, elicited a loud *aferin* from Delì Pasha.

Osman Bey no sooner heard it, than, fired by spite and jealousy, he shook his jereed in the air, shouted the name of Hassan, and bore down upon him at the full speed of his high-mettled Arab. Hassan had barely time to avoid the charge by wheeling *Shèitan* and striking the spurs into his flanks. Still over his shoulder he watched every movement of his pursuer. At length the Bey's jereed sped through the air with unerring aim; every one thought that Hassan was fairly hit, but he had thrown himself suddenly over the right side of his horse, hanging only by the left leg on the saddle, and the jereed passed harmlessly over him. Recovering himself instantaneously, he now pursued in turn, and his jereed struck Osman

Bey fairly on the shoulder. The bout being over, Hassan was cantering leisurely away, when the Bey, goaded to madness at having been defeated by one whom he considered a boy, galloped again after him, and hurled a jereed with all his force at Hassan's head.

Hassan, hearing a horse approaching at full speed from behind, had just turned his head to see what it might be, when the jereed flew past him. The movement had saved him from a serious blow, but the stick grazed the edge of his cheek, and drew blood as it passed. A loud shout broke from Delì Pasha—'Foul, foul ! shame, shame !'*

All the fire that slumbered in Hassan's impetuous nature was kindled by this cowardly outrage. Forgetting the rank of his opponent, and every other consideration but revenging the blow he had received, he snatched a jereed from the hand of a sàis standing by ; it happened to be an unusually heavy one, but in the hand of Hassan it was as light as an arrow. Striking his

* It has before been mentioned that at this game it is forbidden to aim at the head ; but, moreover, in order to explain the expressions of Delì Pasha, it must be mentioned that, according to the rules of the game, every 'bout' consists of two charges, in which each alternately advances and retreats. It is then considered over, and cannot be continued unless a regular challenge be given for another 'bout.'

sharp spurs into the flanks of Shèitan, he pursued his adversary with such terrific speed that even the grey Arab could not carry its rider out of his reach. Rising in his stirrups he threw the jereed with all his force, and it struck the Bey full in the back, just between the shoulder-blades. The blow sounded over the whole arena, and having taken effect just in that part of the back which is nearest to the action of the lungs, the unfortunate Bey's breath was for the time totally suspended. He seemed as it were paralysed, and after swaying backwards and forwards for a few seconds in the saddle, fell heavily to the ground. Had not his docile Arab stopped immediately beside him, his hurts would probably have been much more serious.

After a few minutes, during which water was thrown in the Bey's face by his Mamelukes, he recovered the power of speech; but he was still faint and weak, and after casting on Hassan a look of concentrated, inextinguishable hate, he withdrew, supported by his servants, from the ground. This accident occurring to a man of such high rank, and universally feared, broke up the sports for the day.

'I am sorry for it,' said Delì Pasha, addressing Mr. Thorpe; 'but Hassan was perfectly justified, and Osman Bey only got what he deserved.'

The spectators and combatants were gathered into little knots and groups, all uttering similar sentiments, and some adding, 'This is an unlucky thing for Hassan—Osman Bey never forgives—'tis a brave youth, but the cup of coffee or the dagger will be his fate.'*

* 'A cup of coffee' is a very common phrase in Egypt for expressing the word 'poison,' for which a cup of coffee is a frequent medium.

CHAPTER XVI.

EXHIBITING THE TRUTH OF THE ADAGE, 'THE COURSE OF
TRUE LOVE NEVER DID RUN SMOOTH.'

AFTER the breaking up of the games, Hassan, having given over Shèitan to the groom to be taken to the stable, before he re-entered the house cast a furtive glance upward at the well-known lattice in the harem. This time he could not be mistaken—a white forehead and a dark lustrous eye were certainly visible at the curtained aperture, but they were hastily and timidly withdrawn when they encountered his eager glance.

' 'Tis she—'tis the star of my destiny—the life-blood of my heart,' said Hassan to himself, 'whoever and whatever she may be. Well! she has this day seen that, humble and unknown as I am, the proudest Bey in Egypt shall not insult me with impunity.' And he strode into the house, so completely occupied with dreams of the future that he nearly ran against Ahmed Aga, who was coming to tell him that the Pasha had sent for him. On reaching the upper room where they were assembled, the Kiahia Pasha paid him so many compliments on his uncontested

superiority over all his competitors, that Hassan blushed and looked quite confused ; indeed, he had been so much taken up with other thoughts that he had not been aware, until Delì Pasha called his attention to the fact, that the blood was still trickling from the wound he had received in his cheek.

‘It is nothing,’ said Hassan, smiling, and applying his handkerchief carelessly to it. ‘I hope Osman Bey’s back will suffer as little.’

‘Hassan,’ said Delì Pasha, addressing our hero, ‘the Kiahia informs me that in the course of a day or two our English guests are going to pay a visit to the Pyramids, and that he sends with them a guard of fifty horsemen. They have expressed a desire that you should join their party, as you are already old acquaintances. If you wish to do, so you have my full permission.’

Hassan accepted the invitation readily, for, notwithstanding the latticed window, from which it was difficult to tear himself away, still he had an undefined longing to visit a spot connected with his earliest years and the mystery of his birth.

After the departure of the Kiahia and the Thorpe party, Delì Pasha detained Hassan alone, and said to him,

‘This is a bad business, Hassan ; Osman Bey is now your enemy, and he is a dangerous man.

I will tell you something of his life. Years ago, when he was in charge of some money to pay the troops, Mohammed Ali discovered that he had appropriated a portion of it to his own use, and forthwith caused him to be severely beaten and thrown into prison; after his release he accompanied Ibrahim Pasha to the war against the Wahabees, where he gained a high reputation—for to give him his due, he is a good soldier—and regained his Highness's favour. Since then, Mohammed Ali, whose habit is to raise up those whom he has disgraced,* has made him a Bey, and treated him with much regard. Even now he is named to be my Wakeel or Vice-Governor at Siout, and as I know him to be a cruel and revengeful man, I fear he will find some opportunity of doing you an injury.'

'I fear him not,' said Hassan, boldly. 'I have nothing to do with him; I serve your Excellency, and if he seeks a quarrel with me, let him do so; I am ready.'

'He will not seek a quarrel with you,' said Delî Pasha, smiling at Hassan's simplicity. 'Have

* This peculiarity in Mohammed Ali's character is historically true. He was hasty and severe, often unjust in his punishments; but there was a fund of generosity in his heart, a reaction followed, and he frequently elevated to the highest posts those whom he had previously degraded.

you heard of calumny and slander? Have you heard of poison in a cup of coffee? Have you heard of stabbing in the dark? These are the weapons that great men in Egypt use when they wish to get rid of one whom they hate.'

'I fear him not,' repeated Hassan, with the same frank boldness. 'My life is in the hand of Allah; and neither Osman Bey nor any other man can take it until the predestined day arrives. Let him try his treacherous schemes if he will, he may perhaps learn the truth of our Arabic proverb—'He dug a pit for his neighbour, and he fell into it himself.''

While this conversation is going on between Deli Pasha and Hassan, let us take a peep into the neighbouring building, where Amina was sitting in her upper room, to which her slaves had just brought up a tray covered with sweetmeats and fruits. Mansour, the old eunuch, followed, bearing a cool sherbet of pomegranate, sent to her by the eldest wife* from the other

* As the two surviving wives of Deli Pasha have no connexion with our tale, and did not influence any of the events recorded, I have not thought it necessary to make any special mention of their names, occupations, characters, &c. Doubtless they were very worthy ladies, but it was easy to see that Deli Pasha's best affections were centred on his only daughter, Amina.

wing of the harem. The younger slaves being ordered to retire, there remained only with Amina, Mansour and her governess, Fatimeh Khanum, both of whom had witnessed the jereed play—the eunuch from the front building, and the elder lady from another window in the harem, for it must not be supposed that Amina had made the latter the confidante of her secret visits to the lattice in the boudoir. No, no, those she treasured in a little corner of her own breast, and she never went to the lattice without first locking the door of the boudoir.

Here we must pause to observe that, although we profess the highest respect and admiration for Cupid, and though we willingly admit that there is nothing more purifying and ennobling than a sincere and honourable love, nevertheless it cannot be denied that there is an inherent wickedness in the little god; for behold here two young people, Hassan and Amina, who ten days before never cared to conceal an action, and scarcely a thought, already become, without any instructor but Love, perfect adepts in his wiles, his secrecy, and, we fear we must add, his hypocrisy. The latter word sounds harshly on the ear, but by what other term could we justly characterize the well-assumed indifference with which Amina asked

Fatimeh Khanum and Mansour to relate all the particulars of the games which she had followed with an eye a thousand times more eager than theirs.

Hassan was a great favourite with them both, and as they in turn expatiated on his noble figure, his grace and skill in the use of the jereed, and his unequalled horsemanship, how busily did Amina's trembling fingers peel the orange which they held, whilst the blushes mantled on her cheeks and overspread her neck. She cast her eyes down upon her breast, but the two little budding pomegranates* which they there encountered did not compose or re-assure her, for they rose and fell under a sweet and newly-felt emotion, as if they said, 'this admiration, all these praises, bestowed on Hassan are mine—my own; for herein he dwells, though nobody knows it.' Tears gathered in the excited girl's eyes, and, unable any longer to keep silence, she suddenly raised her head, threw back the clustering locks from her face, and exclaimed—

'Oh, Fatimeh, I have squirted some of the sharp juice of this orange-peel into my eye, and it hurts me so much.'

* It is a frequent image in Arabic poetry to liken the breasts of a young girl to budding pomegranates.

Was she not a little hypocrite? But not satisfied with hearing the praises of Hassan from the lips of her attendants, she wished to hear them also from those of her father, and after Mansour had retired to the other wing of the harem, she said to Fatimeh Khanum—

‘Fatimeh, I have a great desire to see my father this evening, and to hear from him all about those Franks who were his visitors to-day. Go to him, and ask him if he will take supper with his little Amina. I will have prepared for him all the dishes that he best likes.’

Fatimeh, who could never refuse anything to her beloved and affectionate pupil, and who, from her mature age and position in the harem, was always permitted by the Pasha to come to him in his outer apartments, through the private door of communication, whenever she had any message from his daughter, willingly undertook this commission, and proceeded forthwith to execute it.

After passing the eunuchs at the curtained door, she proceeded along the narrow passage which led towards the room usually occupied by Deli Pasha, but before reaching it she had to pass through an ante-room, in which to her surprise she found Hassan walking up and down, alone.

She was about to withdraw, when he came forward and said to her—

‘Lady, do not retire on my account. You were going to seek our Pasha; he will soon be disengaged. A visitor, a Bey whose name I did not hear, has just called, and has something for the Pasha’s private ear. His Highness ordered all the other attendants into the outer hall, and told me to remain here.’

Fatimeh Khanum knew that she ought to retire, but there was something in Hassan’s voice and appearance which detained her in spite of herself. ‘Am I mad? Am I under sorcery? What is there that draws me to this youth by unknown cords? Surely the vanities and the imaginations of love have passed away from my heart.’

Such were the thoughts which followed each other, quicker than the pen can write them, through Fatimeh’s troubled brain, when her eye happened to fall upon Hassan’s wounded cheek, on which a patch of blood, not yet dry, was visible. A woman’s instincts impelled her at once to exclaim—

‘Allah ! Allah ! you are wounded. Why has no one stopped or washed away the blood?’ And, without waiting for his permission, she caught up

one of the porous jugs of water found in almost every Egyptian room, and drew near to Hassan.

‘It is nothing, my aunt,’ said Hassan, calling her by the name of affectionate respect given by the Arabs to elderly ladies; ‘but I will submit to your kind surgery.’

While she was gently washing off the blood, and afterwards binding up the wound with a fine Turkish handkerchief that she held in her hand, a sudden idea seemed to strike Hassan, and scarcely had she completed her simple dressing of his wound than he seized her hand, saying, “Thank you; may Allah prolong your life. I see you have a heart. Have pity on me.”

‘What is it, my son?’ said Fatimeh, in surprise. ‘Wherein can I serve you?’

‘Oh, my aunt, my heart is on fire with love—my liver is roasted*—and if you do not find some remedy I shall die.’

‘My son,’ said Fatimeh, compassionately, though unable to repress a smile, ‘the complaint is not uncommon at your age; but how can I assist you? What is the name of your love, and who is she?’

‘I know not her name, nor who she is,’ re-

* An Eastern image proverbial among lovers.

plied Hassan, passionately; 'but you must know her, for she dwells in the harem with you.'

'In the harem!' said Fatimeh, surprised. 'There are doubtless some fair maidens in our Pasha's harem, but how can you have seen them?'

'Ask me not how,' said Hassan, who would not disclose the secret of the lattice, and of the aperture near the roof of his chamber; 'but I have seen her, and she is lovely as a Hourî of Paradise.'

'It is strange,' said Fatimeh, musing; 'but do not despair. Our Pasha has already married more than one of his favourite Mamelukes to fair maidens from his harem; and if you serve him faithfully you may yet realize your hopes.'

'Inshallah! Inshallah!' replied Hassan; 'yet, Khanum, I would like to know her name, that I might whisper it to my heart, and in my prayers.'

'Agaib!' (wonderful), said the Khanum, still in a musing tone. 'Can it be Zeinab, the Circassian, who came last year from Stamboul?—she is small, with dark-brown hair, and deep blue eyes.'

'No, no, it is not she,' said Hassan, impatiently.

The Khanum then proceeded to name one or two others, giving a slight sketch of their features and appearance. But the same 'No, no,' broke from the impatient Hassan. At length she was

sorely puzzled; for, supposing that Hassan had by some accident caught a glimpse of one of the young female slaves while attending the Pasha's wives to the bath, or to some visit, the idea of her young mistress, who had not once left the harem since Hassan's arrival, never entered her head.

'I fear, Hassan, that I cannot help you even to a name. Methinks you must have seen some stranger coming to visit at our harem, for I have named all those who are young and attractive within our walls. Cannot you describe her in such a way as to assist my conjecture?'

'Describe her!' said Hassan, lowering his voice to a tremulous whisper. 'Every feature, every look, every hair of her head is written in my heart!' He then proceeded to describe the features, the eyes, the looks, the complexion, the hair, with such accurate fidelity, that Fatimeh, fairly thrown off her guard, exclaimed—

'Allah! Allah!—it is Amina Khanum, our Pasha's daughter!'

'Amina!' cried Hassan. 'Thrice blessed name,* henceforth thou art the locked treasure

* To those readers who consider it necessary for an author to observe all national proprieties in a tale, and who might think that the name of Amina savours rather of Italian pastoral than of the East, it may not be amiss to mention that the said 'Amina' is not only a genuine Arabic female name, signifying 'trusty,' 'faithful,' &c. &c., but is also in

of my breast. I thank thee, Khanum, for giving me these beloved syllables to think of by day, and to dream of by night.'

'Are you mad?' said the Khanum, wringing her hands in agitation and distress. 'Do you remember your own position, and who the Lady Amina is? Do you know that the highest and proudest in the land have sued for her hand in vain?'

'I know,' said Hassan, with deep feeling. 'I know who I am—that I am a poor, unknown orphan, without name, without fortune. It is the love that I bear to Amina—not the thought that she is a Pasha's daughter, which prompts me to bow my head and kiss the dust on which she treads. Were she a slave-girl in the harem my worship of her would be still the same. It is herself, her own pure image—not her station or her jewels—that I treasure in my heart of hearts. You say that her hand has been sought by the

high estimation, having been the name of no less a personage than the mother of Mohammed. The root of the word '*amin*' (*true*) is one of the original primitives of the Arabic and Hebrew languages: it was the '*verily, verily*,' so often employed by our Saviour in his threats and warnings, and is still familiar to all in the '*amen*' (so be it, or may it be true) which terminates the greater portion of the prayers offered up in Christendom.

great and the rich. What are they,' he added, drawing himself proudly up, 'that I may not become? Pashas and Beys, forsooth—what were they at my age?—'Mamelukes,' 'pipe-bearers,' and so forth. What was Mohammed Ali at twenty? Let the proudest and the best of them stand forth before me with sword and lance, and prove who best deserves her. Will they climb for her as I would to the highest summits of the Kaf?* Will they dive for her as I would to the lowest depths of ocean? Will they live for her, toil for her, bleed for her, die for her, as I would? Oh, my kind aunt,' he added, in a low and pleading tone, 'have pity on me, speak to Amina for me; tell her that Hassan's heart is in her hand, and that it is only for her that he lives and breathes.'

'Alas! alas!' said the kind-hearted Khanum, moved to tears by the young man's earnest passion. 'What misfortune has befallen? There is no refuge but in God, the compassionate. I pity you, Hassan, with all my heart; but you know that I dare not speak to Amina on such a subject. I am the guardian and protector of her inexperienced youth, and I can name to her no suitor

* 'Kaf,' a lofty and inaccessible mountain, celebrated in Eastern romance and mythology.

who does not appear with her father's sanction. Surely she can have no knowledge or thought of this insane passion,' she added, in a tone of inquiry.

'I know not,' replied Hassan, confusedly. 'It seems to me that she has been in my heart and in my dreams from my earliest youth; her image is interwoven with my being, with my destiny; it floats in the very air I breathe, impregnating it with sweetness and with life. I know not whether the zephyrs and the spirit of dreams have wafted the odour of my vows to the pillow on which the roses of her cheek repose.'*

The Khanum was about to reply when the sound of approaching footsteps was heard, and a servant entered to inform Hassan that the Pasha's visitor had departed, and that his attendance was required.

'Khanum,' said Hassan, who had by a strong effort recovered his composure, 'if you have business with the Pasha, I pray you enter first; I can await his Excellency's pleasure.'

Poor Fatimeh, though scarcely able to control the agitation into which the events of the last few

* The last two lines are from a well-known Arabic love-song.

minutes had thrown her, adopted the suggestion of Hassan, and entering the Pasha's apartment delivered to him the message with which she had been charged by Amina.

‘Tell my Morning Star,’ said Delì Pasha, ‘that I will willingly come and sup with her; indeed, I was going to propose it myself, for I have much to say to her. Draw nearer, Khanum,’ he added, in a lower voice. ‘I know you are a discreet woman, and that you are much attached to Amina, therefore I may tell you that Hashem Bey (Allah knows what a rich old miser he is) has just been here, and the object of his visit was to propose a marriage between her and his son Selim.’

This sudden announcement was too much for the poor Khanum's already over-excited nerves; she staggered and would have fallen, had not the Pasha, with an activity beyond his years, started up and supported her to the divan on which he had been seated.

‘What is the matter, O Khanum?’ he said. ‘What is there in this news to cause you so much agitation? Is not Selim a youth well-born, well-spoken of, rich, and high in the favour of our lord the Viceroy?’

‘Forgive me,’ said the Khanum, in a broken voice; ‘a sudden faintness, a giddiness came over

me—perhaps—perhaps it was the thought that this marriage would separate me for ever from my beloved child.’

‘Nay,’ said the rough old Pasha, moved by her grief, and the cause to which she had attributed it. ‘I know the love you bear to my Amina, and you must also know that the separation of which you speak would be yet more hard for me than for you to bear, but some day it must be endured. Amina is now of an age to marry, and it would be difficult to find a husband more worthy of her choice than Selim. But no more at present; compose your spirits; say nothing of this to Amina, I will break it to her myself; only tell her that I will come and sup with her at sunset.’

Fatimeh Khanum retired, and as she hurried through the room in which she had left Hassan, he marked her agitated step, and caught the words—‘Oh, grief!—oh, misfortune!’—ere she disappeared behind the curtained door that led to the harem.

After her departure Hassan remained for some time with Delì Pasha, receiving orders, and writing letters on subjects connected with his private affairs; and when these were concluded he retired, and passed the remainder of the afternoon

in finger-talk with his dumb *protégé*, whose intelligence and knowledge of all that was passing at Cairo he found to be much beyond his years. The boy seemed so happy and so grateful, that Hassan found a real pleasure in perfecting himself in the practice of finger-conversation with his humble companion.

At sunset Delì Pasha proceeded, as had been agreed, to take his evening meal with Amina, who, with the instinctive tact of an affectionate daughter, had not only taken care to provide the dishes that he most fancied, but had arranged the cushions of his divan so that they were perfectly adapted to his habitual attitude—they were neither too soft nor too hard, nor too high nor too low, nor too broad nor too narrow; and as she knelt playfully before him, and placed in his hand the gold-thread purse, which she had just finished, he stooped to kiss her fair forehead, and as he met the upturned glance of her eyes beaming with affection, he said—‘Allah bless thee, my child,’ with an earnest tenderness, of which those who had known him in the days of his wild and wayward youth would not have believed his nature capable.

Fatimeh Khanum was not present. The supper was brought up to the door by eunuchs, and

served by the female attendants who usually waited on Amina. Delî Pasha did not fail to praise several dishes which had been prepared expressly for him with unusual care; not that the old soldier was a gourmand; far from it, but he recognised and appreciated the affectionate zeal evinced by Amina to please him.

During the meal he talked about the events of the morning, and the English strangers; and it was arranged that he should cause an invitation to be sent to Mrs. Thorpe and her daughter to visit his harem. On that occasion they would be received by his eldest wife, but Amina might be present, and be interested in seeing the Frank ladies' manners, appearance, and dress. The Pasha also alluded to the jereed game, and to the actors therein; and, while so doing, he mentioned Hassan in terms which brought the tell-tale blood into Amina's cheeks, and made her little heart flutter, like a bird newly caught and encaged. He spoke of him not only as being unequalled in horsemanship and skill in arms, but as being remarkable for his truth, modesty, and integrity.

‘I like the lad,’ said the old Pasha; ‘he is of a kind rarely found now-a-days—a hot head, a ready arm, and a warm heart, but no laf-guizaf

(talk and boasting). If we had another war with the Wahabees, or with any other nation, that lad might soon be a Pasha; but in these dull times there is no fortune to be won by the sword. So Hassan must remain khaznadar of a very small khazneh.* Such is destiny, Amina—all is destiny.'

Little did the unconscious father think that in every word which he was then uttering he was fanning a flame already kindled in his young daughter's breast—little noted he that while he spoke of Hassan, her busy fingers were unwittingly stripping a harmless flower of its petals; and that, as he concluded, two crystal drops, not of sorrow, but called up by love from the hidden fountains of tenderness, trembled awhile on the long lashes that fringed her downcast eyes, then lost themselves among the roses of her glowing cheeks.

Poor Amina!—enjoy while you may these visions of a second—these illusions of a moment—for the breath of the same fond father who has just unconsciously aided in their formation is now as unconsciously about to dispel them.

No sooner was the supper over, and the Pasha had enjoyed his pipe and his coffee, than he called Amina to his side, and pushing back the tresses

* *i. e.*, 'Treasurer of a very small treasure.'

from her face, said to her—‘Morning Star, you are no longer a child—you are a little woman now.’

Alas ! the fair girl’s heart had lately explained to her this truth in language more expressive and convincing than her father’s.

He then proceeded to relate to her the visit of Hashem Bey, and its object, together with the reasons which made him take a favourable view of Selim’s proposal, in words nearly similar to those which he had used when speaking to Fatimeh Khanum in the morning.

Had the lights not been at some distance from the divan, and the room itself rather dark, he would have been frightened at the paleness which overspread his daughter’s face, though one little hand strove to cover it. She did not speak, but he felt the death-like coldness of the other little hand which was clasped in his.

‘Speak, my child, what ails thee?’ he said. ‘Marriage is the destiny, the blessing of women. What is there to terrify thee in these proposals from a youth who is rich, amiable, worthy, and of a condition equal to your own?’ She sank on her knees before him, and in accents that might have moved a heart of stone, sobbed rather than said—

‘Oh, spare me, father!—spare me!—save me from this hated marriage.’ And as she bowed her head upon his hands, he felt her tears falling hot and fast upon them.

Astonished at this excessive and unexpected emotion, the fond father spoke gently to her, and used all the arguments which he could think of to reconcile her to the proposed match. For some time tears and sobs were her only reply. At length she found strength to say—

‘Father, I will obey you in everything. My life is in your hands. But if you do not wish to break my heart, and send me to an early grave, save me from this marriage. I do not wish to leave you, father. At least give me a year’s or six months’ delay.’ And again she hid her face in his hands, and the hot tears gushed forth afresh.

Delì Pasha could not resist the pleading grief of his beloved child. Secretly unwilling himself to part from her, he consented to the delay for which she so earnestly entreated.

‘Be comforted, light of my eyes,’ he said; ‘it is only your welfare and happiness that I wish. Dry up your tears, and let me see you smile again. I have not passed my word to Hashem Bey. I will write to him that I wish you to go

with me to Siout, and that the time for betrothal is not now opportune. That if after six months he desires to renew the subject, it can be then taken into consideration. Will that satisfy you, Amina?’

Amina did look up, and though her eyes were still bedewed with tears, rays of hope, and joy, and gratitude shone through them like sunbeams through an April shower. Covering his hands with her kisses, she exclaimed—‘Oh, father, you have given me a second life—you are always too good—too kind to your Amina.’

What bright hopes, what sunny visions had the young girl’s sanguine imagination conceived, and crowded into the space of six months! Like wild and playful meteors they had shot swiftly through her brain. Selim would be gone to Turkey or the other world, Hassan would be a Bey or Pasha!

‘My child, it is time for you to go to rest,’ said Delì Pasha, rising to take his departure. ‘Allah bless you, may your night be happy, and to-morrow let me see my Morning Star shine as brightly as ever.’ With an affectionate kiss on her forehead he took his leave, and went across to his own apartments.

Delì Pasha was neither a suspicious nor a

reflecting man, but he had a fair share of good sense when he chose to exert it, and now the more he mused on the events of the day the more did he feel puzzled and unable to explain them; the strange emotion and agitation of Fatimeh Khanum, who was usually so staid and tranquil in her bearing, the still more violent emotion and agitation of his daughter, on receiving proposals of marriage from a suitor altogether unexceptionable, and whose name he imagined must be unknown to her. 'Surely,' he said to himself, 'these women must have heard some story against Selim, that he is hateful, or cruel, or brutal. I must inquire of Fatimeh Khanum, and find this out.'

While he was indulging in these meditations, Amina had locked herself into her boudoir, and having loosened the bands that confined her hair, left it to fall in its glossy luxuriance all over her lovely neck and shoulders, then, drawing forth her small praying carpet, she went through her accustomed prayers, bowing her fair forehead upon it, and thanking Allah for having preserved her from a danger, the recollection of which still made her shudder.

She went to the lattice, and gently, very gently, opened the side of it. She could see

nothing, for the moon was not up, neither could she be seen, though Hassan was watching like a true sentinel of love; the creaking of the half-opened lattice did not, however, escape his quick ear, and ere she retired from it she heard in a half-whispered tone, that seemed to hover in the air, the following verses :—

‘ Extolled be the Lord who hath endued with all beauty she
who hath enslaved my heart.

I see her not, I hear her not, yet I feel the fragrance of
her presence like concealed spikenard.

My love is the moon, and I am a solitary cloud wandering
over the face of the sky—

A cloud obscure and unnoticed; but let the moon shine upon
it, and straightway it is robed in silver.’*

* These and other verses occasionally scattered through this tale are translations from Arabic scraps of poetry and love-songs popular in Egypt. And here I may add, that the reader must not suppose that the interview related in this chapter between the father and daughter is intended to represent the ordinary relations of domestic life in Egypt; on the contrary, it is an exceptional picture, exhibiting the fondness of an eccentric and warm-hearted father for an only child. It is scarcely necessary to say, that in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, marriages in the East are arranged by the parents and relatives without the slightest reference to the inclinations of the bride.

CHAPTER XVII.

HASSAN VISITS THE PYRAMIDS, IN COMPANY OF THE
THORPE PARTY.

THE following morning Hassan was closeted for some time with Delì Pasha, explaining to him the results of his examination of his predecessor's accounts, and pointing out defalcations and deficiencies in some quarters, and certain sums due, but not collected, in others. Delì Pasha hated accounts and business, but he saw so much earnest zeal in Hassan's desire to render them clear, that he forced himself to give them some attention, and even that little sufficed to make it evident that his former khaznadar had complicated them on purpose to cheat him, and that his present one made them as simple as possible, and compensated for his want of experience by his conscientious industry. Scarcely had he got through the summary which Hassan had drawn up, ere he clapped his young treasurer on the shoulder, and broke out into a fit of laughter—

‘Hassan,’ he said, ‘you are the cream of khaznadars, and I am sensible of all the zeal and industry you have shown, but I cannot

help laughing when I see my young Bedouin-Antar doing the work of a Coptic clerk !

‘I grant,’ said Hassan, smiling, ‘that the pen is not quite so familiar to my hand as the lance; but if I know too little, I see plainly that my predecessor knew too much, and I hope that the khazneh will furnish you with more purses this year than the last ; it is my wish and duty to do you good service, and be it with lance or pen, Inshallah ! I will do it.’

‘Would you like a little exercise for your lance?’ said Delì Pasha. ‘I do not mean a jereed game, but a few sharp thrusts and hard blows in earnest.’

‘On my head be it—I am ready,’ said Hassan, his eyes brightening. ‘Where is such occupation to be found?’

‘I have this morning received a note from the Kiahia,’ said Delì Pasha, drawing it out as he spoke from under a cushion of his divan, ‘and he tells me that a band of the Sammalous tribe have lately come up on a plundering expedition from their own country, near the Bahirah, and have ravaged several villages near Ghizeh, carrying off money and horses. It is said that they are not now very far from the Pyramids. The Kiahia proposes to send eighty horsemen instead of fifty

to escort the English party going to-morrow to the Ghizeh Pyramids; forty can remain to guard them, and the remaining forty can make an excursion into the desert, and try to find and capture these Sammalous thieves. He adds in his note, that he should be glad if you could accompany that party, as you were trained in Bedouin warfare, and he has formed a high opinion of your skill and courage. What say you to the proposal?’

‘Most willingly will I go,’ replied Hassan, ‘to have a bout with those rascally Sammalous, who are the enemies of my old tribe, the Oulâd-Ali. The very last fight that I saw among the Arabs was with them, and they wounded my adopted father.’

‘El-hamdu-lillah’ (Allah be praised), said Deli Pasha, ‘that the expedition is to your taste. I will write to the Kiahia that you accept, and will advise him to put the horsemen sent after the Sammalous under your command; and now as a chance hurt may befall from lance or bullet, and you might be unwilling to expose a horse not your own, to make your mind easy on that score I make you a present of your friend Shèitan; you have well deserved him, and, to say the truth, I do not believe he would obey any other master.’

Hassan carried the Pasha's hand to his lips, and said, 'May your life and happiness be prolonged.'*

'Go, then, to-morrow morning,' continued Delî Pasha, 'and Allah go with you; the Kiahia's horsemen will meet you at Ghizeh, where you will also find one or two of those who were plundered by the Sammalous, and who will aid you in tracking the party.'

Hassan took his leave, and as he went to his own room he met his dumb *protégé*. Greeting him kindly, he informed him that he was going on an excursion, which might detain him a few days, and at the same time thinking that the boy might be in want of some necessary during his absence, he offered him a few small pieces of silver.

Murad smiled, and declined the money, showing his protector a few coins of similar value in his

* Few of my countrymen who have not resided in the East are probably aware that it is contrary to custom, and indeed to good breeding, to return thanks for a present. The system of present giving is widespread over the whole East. If a great man makes a present to an equal the bearer is rewarded, and a present of equal value is returned. If a present is sent by a great man to an inferior, the latter gives as much as he can afford to the bearer; but in *no case* is it considered good manners on the part of either giver or receiver to allude to a present in after conversation.

own possession. In his rapid finger-language he then explained to Hassan that he was now sufficiently recovered to run with messages as before, and that he was already employed in this way at a coffee-house, and one or two other houses in the neighbourhood. With a few words of encouragement, Hassan left him, and went on to his own room, where he busied himself in examining and cleaning his pistols, which he carefully loaded. He took care to see that both his sword and dagger were loose in the sheath, and that the point of his lance was sharp. While busied in these preparations, and in putting into his saddle-bags the few articles of clothing which he meant to take with him, he hummed rather than sung snatches of old Arab songs.

All at once the thought struck him that Amina might be at the lattice. He crept up the ladder, and peeped through the aperture, that could not be called a window. There, indeed, was Amina, and the lattice was open, and, though the twilight was darkening, Hassan could see that she was weeping, for the snowy Damascus kerchief was often applied to her eyes.

Hassan knew not what to do. He longed to comfort her—to sympathise with her, but he knew that if he showed himself, or made her

aware of his presence by addressing a word to her, she would immediately close the lattice and withdraw. So he looked on in silence, and partook of her unknown grief, till the tears stole into his own eyes.

At length, unable any longer to keep silence, he drew his head away from the aperture, so that he could still see her, but she could not see him. He began to sing a well-known Turkish love-song in a very low tone. The sound of the air, though not the words, reached her ear ; she cast her eyes furtively at the aperture in the opposite wall, but seeing nothing, she did not withdraw. A little louder he sung, and the words reached her ear, and she dried her tears and listened. It was a popular song, about Youssuf and Zuleika, which, even if others could have heard, would not compromise her ; but her beating heart told her who was singing, and for whom the song was meant. In the last verse the voice sunk nearly to a whisper. Still she caught the words, and the name of Amina was substituted for Zuleika. With a deep blush she disappeared from the casement, and all was silence and darkness.

On the following morning early Hassan set forth, mounted on Shèitan, and crossed the Nile to Ghizeh by a ferry, which then, as now, existed

at a short distance to the southward of Boulak. He was accompanied by his sàis, who drove before him a donkey, carrying our hero's saddlebags and the large cloak and Arab blanket which served him on such occasions for a bed.

On reaching Ghizeh, he found the whole Thorpe party, with the horsemen who were to accompany them, already arrived; there were also forty or fifty donkeys, laden with tents, bedding, cooking utensils, and all the creature comforts which Mr. Demetri's foresight had prepared for a residence of several days in the desert.

Hassan saluted them all in turn, and Demetri and Mr. Foyster insisted on shaking hands with him in English fashion. After exchanging a few words with them, he turned towards the Kiahia's horsemen, and was pleased to recognise in their leader the same good-looking young Georgian whom he had seen at the head of the Kiahia's Mamelukes at the jereed play. Calling him on one side, Hassan inquired whether he had any precise instructions as to the course to be pursued for the discovery and seizure of the Sammalous Arabs.

'Yes,' he replied, 'I have a letter to the governor of this district, ordering him to provide one or two villagers well acquainted with the

road to guide the English party to the Pyramids,* and also to place under our charge two Arabs now waiting here, who belong to the villages robbed by the Sammalous, and who are supposed to have some knowledge of the direction in which they have retreated.'

Under these circumstances it was deemed advisable that the whole party should proceed towards the divan of the governor of Ghizeh, which was at no great distance from the spot where they were now assembled. They moved onward accordingly; and as they approached the governor's house, the Georgian and Hassan rode forward to demand an interview with that personage, while the remainder of the party halted at a short distance from the house. They had not been there long before their ears were saluted by sounds too familiar to all who have passed any time in the neighbourhood of a government divan in Egypt,—namely, the heavy and swiftly-descending blows of a stick, accompanied by shrieks and

* It must be remembered that thirty years ago the path or paths leading from Ghizeh to the Pyramids were not beaten and trodden as they now are; and even now, so long as the waters of the Nile are high, the direct road is intercepted by a number of deep sluices or creeks, which oblige the traveller to make a considerable circuit under the guidance of natives acquainted with the country.

cries of the victim, 'Amân ! amân ! mercy ! mercy ! I am dead. Mercy ! mercy ! You may kill me, but I have not a farthing.'

The Europeans stopped their ears to shut out these painful sounds, while Demetri, more accustomed to such sights, went forward to witness the punishment, and ascertain what might be its cause and issue. The cries died away into moans and groans, which soon became altogether inaudible, leaving the Europeans to imagine that the sufferer was dead, or had fainted; and Mr. Thorpe was virtuously and indignantly inveighing against the barbarous cruelty of the Turkish governors when Demetri arrived.

As he approached, they saw that he was convulsed with laughter, which only redoubled Mr. Thorpe's indignation; and he asked the dragoman, in an angry voice, how he could be so brutal as to jest over the agony and torture of a fellow-creature.

'You shall hear—you shall hear, O my master,' said Demetri, still unable to compose his features to a serious expression. 'The man whom they were beating is a Fellah, who occupies some land in the neighbourhood, and though he sells his beans and his wheat like others, he never has any money to pay the taxes on the day that they

are collected ; either he has been robbed, or the crop failed, or the rats devoured half of it, or he lost his purse on the road as he was coming to pay in the money due to the Government—always some excuse ; and, though for two successive seasons he has been severely beaten, they never could find a piaster about his person, nor extract one from him. This morning, just as your Excellencies came, the same scene had been repeated ; he had vowed his inability to pay, and the Governor ordered him two hundred and fifty blows on the feet. The fellow took them all, bawling, and screaming, and groaning, as you heard ; and a stranger might well suppose that he was almost, if not quite murdered. Well, as soon as he had received the number of blows ordered, he was released, and began to stagger out of the Governor's presence as if he could scarcely stand on his feet. In doing so he nearly ran up against one of the kawàsses standing by, a strong, rough fellow, who struck him a smart blow on the cheek with his open hand. The suddenness of the blow took him so by surprise, that it opened his mouth unawares, and there dropped from it to the ground something enveloped in a piece of rag. The kawàss darted forward, and seized it. On opening it they found

within four gold sequins, being the exact amount of the sum which he owed to the Government. The rascal had come with a full determination not to pay if he could help it, and rather to take any amount of punishment he could conveniently bear; if he found the beating carried to a length that his patience could not endure, he could at any time stop it by producing the money. It seems that the two hundred and fifty which he had received had produced little or no effect on his leathern feet, and he was going off, chuckling at having cheated the Government once more, when that accidental blow on the cheek made him spit out the money.*

It may be believed that this version of the story changed the compassion of the Thorpe party into an inclination to laugh, which few of them were able to resist, and shortly afterwards the Fellah who had received the beating, and had unintentionally paid his taxes, was pointed out to

* Although the Thorpes are imaginary personages, and therefore did not witness this scene, it actually occurred some years later, exactly as narrated in the text. It may afford food for reflection for those benevolent philanthropists who would encourage the introduction of sudden reforms, and the abolition of corporal punishment among a population habituated to the stick and to slavery for a period of five or six thousand years!

them by Demetri, walking homeward to his village, apparently with as little suffering in his feet as if he had been beaten by children with straws.

While Mr. Thorpe was discussing with Müller the peculiar features of character exhibited by the Egyptian Fellah in the scene which had just occurred, and Dr. Moss was eloquently explaining to Selden how the external cuticle of the human foot became indurated by the habit of walking unshod, Hassan and the Georgian returned, accompanied by the guides required, so the whole party set off merrily towards the Pyramids. The path which they followed not being very circuitous, they reached the desired spot soon after noon, which afforded ample time for the servants to pitch their tents, and arrange the beds and the baggage.

Mr. Thorpe had now reached the goal of wishes long entertained, for although Thebes, Memphis, and other places of antiquarian interest had mingled in his dreams, there was something in the grand and antique simplicity of the Pyramids which had assigned to them a pre-eminence in his imagination. Immediately on arriving he commenced his tour and survey of the great Pyramid.

Mrs. Thorpe was too tired with her ride to

think of aught but repose, so she sat upon a travelling-chair, while Demetri, Mr. Foyster, and Mary Powell busied themselves in separating and arranging the boxes and portmanteaus. Dr. Moss also remained, so Mr. Thorpe proceeded on his walks, accompanied by Müller, Selden and his sister following.

Hassan went with them, rightly judging that his services might be necessary, not only to interpret for them, but to protect them against the importunity of the Arabs, who had flocked in considerable numbers to see the strangers, and to devise various projects for extracting money from them. There were not then, as now, crowds of Arabs, half Bedouins half villagers, who make a living at the Pyramids by running up and down them for prizes, and assisting the numerous travellers to reach the top; but there was even then a remnant of some tribe located there in tents, who enjoyed a kind of prescriptive right to the custody of the place, and Hassan and the Georgian had agreed to pay a score of these to act as guards or watchmen while the party remained, a precaution which probably saved many of their chattels from being pilfered.

Mr. Thorpe and Müller were already engaged in a discussion concerning the history of the

Pyramids, to which Selden was listening with interest; Emily had fallen a little behind, and was turning to ask some question of Hassan, who had spoken to her a moment before, when she observed him standing on a large stone at the base of the Pyramid, his eyes cast down to the ground in a fit of profound abstraction; there was an air of melancholy in his countenance, so different from its usual expression, that she could not resist the impulse which led her to ask him the subject of his meditations, which she imagined to be something connected with the story of the Pyramids.

‘Lady,’ he replied, in a tone of deep feeling; ‘the dream of my infancy passed across my mind. This stone on which I stand was once my cradle.’

‘Your cradle, Hassan!—How mean you?’

‘It is now about twenty years ago,’ said Hassan, ‘that my foster-mother was sitting here—perhaps on this very stone, for she said it faced towards Cairo—when a horseman, believed to be my father, placed me—an infant wrapped in a shawl—at her side, and fled at full speed. He has never since been heard of. I know not who he was, nor whether he yet lives. I know not who was my mother—I am a stray leaf, blown about by the wind of destiny.’

‘Be assured he was no mean or ignoble man—it could not be,’ said Emily; then, blushing at her own warmth, she added, ‘I hope you may yet find him, and be happy with him.’

‘May Allah bless you, and grant this, and all your other prayers,’ said Hassan; ‘but, lady, do not speak of this matter to others—though known to many, it pains my heart to hear it spoken of!’

After making the tour of the great Pyramid, and admiring with reverence and wonder the architectural energy and skill which, in the infancy of mankind, had piled upon each other those enormous blocks, brought from a distance of many hundred miles, Mr. Thorpe proposed to ascend, and to see from the top the effect of a sunset on the valley of the Nile. A score of Arabs were already on the alert to assist the worthy gentleman and his party in the ascent, and so zealously obtrusive were they in their manner of bestowing their assistance, that Hassan was obliged to tell them angrily not to pull and haul the strangers as if they were baskets of dates. Apparently they paid little heed to his admonition, for, just as they had reached the third step, one of them put his two hands on Emily’s waist, by way of helping her up to the fourth, when, with a face crimson with blushes,

she turned and said, 'Hassan, let me go down again—I cannot go up with these rude men.'

Hassan had noticed the action of the Arab, and in a moment was at her side. Seizing the fellow by the collar, he shook him violently, and ordered him to be off, and not to touch the lady. The Arab, afraid of losing his bakshish,* or irritated at being roughly handled, gave some angry reply, and seized hold of Hassan, as if to wrestle with him. As well might a cat have struggled with a lion. Hassan shook him off, and with one sweep of his arm sent the Arab down the three steps to the ground, when he fell, severely bruised, and muttering sundry undistinguishable menaces. This proved a wholesome warning to the others, and they kept at a respectful distance from Hassan, who easily conducted Emily to the top. The huge stones are so laid that they form continuous steps—steps higher, it is true, than ladies or gentlemen are accustomed to mount—but Hassan, by preceding

* It may be scarcely requisite to explain that 'bakshish' means a present, either in the shape of 'alms,' or a 'reward.' In travelling in Egypt or Turkey it is the first word that meets the traveller's ear on arriving, and the last that he hears on departing. The word itself is neither Turkish nor Arabic, but a corruption of Persian.

her one step, took her two hands, and drew her up as lightly and easily as if she had been a child.

When they reached the top, what a magnificent spectacle awaited them. There lay the broad and verdant valley of the Nile stretched out beneath them. Far as the eye could reach were gardens, villages, and palm-groves, among which the Nile, studded with white sails, wound its sinuous course, while beyond its eastern bank rose the Mother of the World,* her multitudinous domes and minarets all bathed in the golden flood of the sun's descending rays. All there felt the softening influence of the hour—the imposing magnificence of the scene. None dared to break the spell by an exclamation of admiration—even Selden's thoughtless gaiety was hushed. Emily glided to her father's side, and passed her arm round his waist; she looked up in his face, and as he returned the silent pressure of her hand, she saw that the heart of the kind and enthusiastic antiquarian was filled with emotions that could not find vent in words.

Selden was the first to break the spell, and unslinging a portable telescope, which he carried

* Before mentioned as an Arabic name for Cairo.

in a leathern case over his shoulder, he began to direct it alternately at different objects that attracted his attention in the variegated landscape. ‘See,’ he cried to Hassan, ‘I can distinguish the ferry where we crossed the Nile, and the houses and the boats, as if they were close at hand.’ So saying he gave the glass to Hassan, who, not having been accustomed to use such an instrument, had some difficulty at first in arranging the right focus to his eye; when, however, he had done so, his surprise and pleasure knew no bounds. He began counting the persons on board a boat, which, with the naked eye, could scarcely be descried, and he owned in his heart that this was one of the inventions which proved the superiority of European skill.

Selden noticed his extreme pleasure, and catching his sister’s eye, he gave her a nod, as much as to say we understand each other. When Hassan shut up the telescope to return it, Selden said to him, ‘Nay, keep it, Hassan—it is yours; I have another in my portmanteau, and can well spare it.’ So saying, he unslung the case from his own neck and passed it over that of Hassan, whose eyes eloquently expressed the pleasure he felt, as he replied, ‘I was blind before, but you have given me new eyes!—may Allah guard and

prolong your life.' They descended as they had come up, and found that, under the superintendence of Mrs. Thorpe, the servants had prepared in their tent a dinner, which, after the fatigues of the day, was far from unwelcome.

CHAPTER XVIII.

HASSAN AND HIS FRIEND THE GEORGIAN PURSUE THE
SAMMALOUS.

NO sooner was Hassan free from the charge that he had undertaken, of escorting Emily and her relatives to the Pyramids, than he hastened to the Georgian's tent to ascertain whether any intelligence had reached him respecting the course taken by the Sammalous.

‘Much,’ replied the Georgian; ‘an Arab has arrived, a friend of those whom we brought with us, who followed them stealthily at a distance, and saw the spot where they encamped, about fifteen miles to the north-west of this place; they do not travel fast, as they are encumbered with the number of the horses which they have captured, there being among them some mares with foal.’

‘Can I see and speak with this man?’ said Hassan.

‘Assuredly,’ replied his friend, at the same time ordering his servant to summon the Arab. The latter entered, and displayed to Hassan's scrutinizing gaze a light sinewy frame and a shrewd intelligence. The answers which he gave

to Hassan's minute inquiries were clear and satisfactory, and from them he ascertained that the marauding party were about fifty strong, mostly armed with lances, some heavy guns, and pistols. 'To overtake them will not be difficult,' added the Arab, 'nor to retake the horses, that is, if your own be swift and strong; but you will never capture their leader, for he is mounted on Nebleh.'

'And what is Nebleh?' inquired Hassan.

'Have you never heard of Nebleh?' replied the Arab, eyeing our hero with an expression something between surprise and contempt; 'I thought every one had heard of Nebleh,* she is the fleetest mare in the desert; when or how the Sammalous stole her I know not, but none can catch her.'

'We will see that,' replied Hassan, smiling; then turning to the Georgian, he said to him, 'My friend, it is true that I am younger than you and have less experience, nevertheless I am half a Bedouin, and have seen something of these desert forays; will you be guided by me in this expedition?'

'Willingly,' replied the Georgian, with cor-

* Nebleh, in Arabic, means 'arrow.'

responding frankness ; ‘ I and my men will follow your counsel in everything.’

After a few minutes more of earnest conversation with the Arab, during which Hassan learnt from him further particulars respecting the nature of the ground, the existence or non-existence of water, &c., he turned to the Georgian and said—

‘ My counsel then is that you select thirty-five of the best mounted of your men, leaving the remainder here to guard the English party, under the charge of the Mameluke whom you consider most trustworthy ; you and I will both go in pursuit of the Sammalous. Let men and horses take food now and rest till midnight, at which hour the moon will rise ; let each man secure to his saddle a bag containing eight or ten pounds of bread and a few dates ; our guide can lead us to water, not much nor good, but for two days it will suffice, and in that time, Inshallah ! we will capture the rogues, and, perhaps, Nebleh too. Allah knows !’

The Georgian cheerfully acquiesced in Hassan’s proposal, being inspired with confidence by the prompt decision with which he formed and uttered it. The two friends then supped together, and separated to make the preparations agreed upon.

At midnight the party moved silently out of

the encampment, and, guided by the Arab who had brought the intelligence, commenced their march over the desert. For several hours there was no need for any precaution, and Hassan and the Georgian, riding side by side at the head of their men, conversed together with the frankness congenial to their age and spirits; both were eager for distinction, and both hoped for an adventure that would do them honour; they talked much of Nebleh, and Hassan said, as he patted the sleek neck of his now miscalled steed,

‘If Shèitan once comes within ten spear lengths of her and she escapes, she must be swifter than any horse I have seen.’

‘Truly he is a noble horse,’ said the Georgian; ‘mine is not slow, and I remember that on the day of the jereed I could neither escape your horse nor your spear.’

‘Nay,’ replied Hassan, laughing, ‘these are but the chances of the game; had your horse been swift as Shèitan my shoulder would have felt your jereed.’

Thus discoursing, they followed their silent guide, who had not struck into the heart of the desert, but had pursued a route parallel to that taken by the Sammalous, and nearer to the cultivated ground. He halted in a small hollow, in

which was a pool left by the receding waters of the Nile, and around its edge a few patches of the herbs and grasses which grow on the borders of the desert.

‘We are now nearly opposite their last night’s encampment,’ he said to Hassan; ‘the moon is low, and we must remain here till dawn.’

The party dismounted accordingly to rest and refresh the horses, and await the first grey approach of dawn; no sooner did it appear than they were again in motion, and from the summit of a small mound the guide pointed to a curiously shaped hill to the westward, saying—

‘Just below that hill they encamped last night.’

As soon as they reached its base, the party was halted, and Hassan went up with the guide to reconnoitre; when near the top they crept on their hands and knees, and looked over into the plain below; it was of considerable extent, and, although they strained their eyes in every direction, no trace could they see of man or horse.

‘They have travelled faster than I expected,’ said the Arab, in a tone of disappointment; ‘they must already have passed over that ridge opposite, for that is the way to the tents of their tribe.’

Hassan thought it now a good opportunity for trying the virtue of the present that he had re-

ceived the day before from Selden ; unslinging his telescope, and adjusting its focus to the mark he had made on the brass, he directed it to the range of hills pointed out by the guide ; for some time he looked in vain, but suddenly an exclamation of joy broke from him.

‘Praise to Allah, I have them now ! one, two, three horsemen just going over the ridge ; the rest must have passed before.’

‘Which way are they going ?’ inquired the guide.

Hassan pointed with his finger. ‘Good, good !’ exclaimed the guide. ‘Wait till you are sure that the last is past.’

After some minutes of careful and minute survey with the glass, during which he satisfied himself that none remained on the near side of the ridge, he made a sign to the party to advance, and informed his Georgian friend of what he had seen. ‘El-hamdu-lillah !’ was the joyous reply, and Hassan having vaulted into the saddle, the party soon crossed the plain at an easy canter. When they reached the ridge the same manœuvre was repeated, and Hassan and the guide, creeping cautiously to the top, saw the whole party of the Sammalous crossing the plain beyond, their leisurely movement plainly indicating that as yet

they had no idea of pursuers being on their track.

Hassan now took a careful survey of the country, from which, as well as from the opinion of the guide, he ascertained that at no great distance on the right hand a valley or hollow ran in a direction nearly parallel with that taken by the Sammalous; his decision was formed in a moment, and he hastily descended to communicate it to his companions.

‘There they are in that plain below,’ he said. ‘I will take a dozen of the best mounted of your men and gallop down that valley, so as to get a-head of them and cut off their retreat; give me two hours and then fall on their track; we shall have them between us, and, Inshallah! they will not escape us.’

No sooner was it said than put in execution; Hassan led the way down the valley at a hand-gallop, checking, however, the speed of Shèitan, so as not to exhaust the horses of the troopers behind him. The ground favoured their manœuvre, and they had already passed half the space requisite to enable them to head the enemy, when they suddenly came upon an Arab riding leisurely up from a hollow at right angles to that which our hero was following.

‘It is one of the Sammalous,’ he said, ‘who knows the country; he has been down to a well in that hollow; if he once gets to the crest of the hill he will give the alarm to his party, and our plan is spoiled; he shall not do so if Shèitan’s breath holds good. Do you move gently forward, and spare your horses; leave me to deal with him.’ So saying, he struck the stirrups into Shèitan’s flanks, who darted forth like a bolt from a cross-bow.

The Sammalous no sooner saw a horseman approaching at full speed than he divined that his followers were in pursuit of his party, he therefore urged his horse to his utmost speed, but Hassan had been too quick for him, and had got so far a-head on the hill-side that he had nothing for it but to fight or be taken prisoner, and, being a bold, stout fellow, he did not feel disposed to yield to a single enemy.

Hassan having got between the Sammalous and his party, reined up Shèitan, and called to him to lower his lance and surrender. The Sammalous, seeing that our hero’s followers were already visible in the distance, and that no time was to be lost, made no other reply than by charging Hassan at full speed. Our hero observing that his adversary’s lance was three or four feet

longer than his own, and that he could not await the charge, dexterously avoided it by wheeling Shèitan suddenly to the right, and, as he passed in full career, dealt him a blow on the head with his dabboos,* which hurled him senseless from the saddle.

‘Aferin, bravo ! Ahmed Aga, my friend,’ said Hassan to himself, ‘when you gave me this weapon I did not think to employ it so soon and so well !’ so saying, he dismounted, and commenced operations by securing the fallen man’s horse, after that he turned to examine the rider, whom he found to be stunned and bruised, but not mortally hurt ; Hassan kept guard over him until the arrival of his friends. No sooner did they appear than he said—

‘We have no time to lose ; the Sammalous knew that this fellow came hither for water over that ridge ; if he does not return they will begin to suspect, and send a party to look for him, who

* A ‘dabboos’ is a kind of war-club or mace much in use among the Mamelukes, in whose military equipment it hung at the saddle-bow. It resembles a pin in shape, being a smooth round handle, surmounted by a head or ball of iron ; from the latter sometimes there protruded a sharp spike. I have seen some of these weapons beautifully inlaid with gold and silver, and the handles covered with velvet. They are not now in use, and are only sold as relics or curiosities.

would discover us before our plan is ripe. I must throw dust in their eyes !' So saying, he coolly proceeded to take off the striped blanket which the Sammalous wore, and taking also the kufiyah or red kerchief which formed the head-dress of the latter, he wrapped it round his own head.

Having thus disguised himself, he mounted the horse of his fallen adversary, who at that moment came to his senses, and, sitting up, looked on at what was going forward, and rubbed his eyes as if he were waking out of a dream. Hassan desired one of the troopers to bind his hands fast behind him, and to tie his feet, after which the party proceeded under his direction along the valley, whilst he himself, trusting to his disguise, took the way towards the top of the hill which divided his party from those of whom he was in pursuit.

As soon as he reached the top he had the satisfaction of seeing them in the plain immediately below. They were going at a slow pace ; some of the slaves and boys stopping and diverging to the right and left to drive up the lagging mares and foals, while the main body pursued their route, evidently unsuspecting of the vicinity of danger. Hassan had not been a moment on the crest of the hill ere they perceived him ; but as they

expected their comrade to re-appear from that quarter, and they recognized his horse, blanket, and head-dress, it was impossible for them at that distance to distinguish the features or figure of the rider, and the motions of Hassan were such as to disarm all suspicion, as he rode leisurely and in a lazy attitude on a parallel line with themselves, apparently allowing the horse to pick his own way. Meanwhile he noted accurately their numbers and rate of march, so that he was able to calculate with considerable exactness the most favourable point for sweeping over the hill with his party to intercept their retreat. This latter manœuvre he was obliged to defer until the appearance of the Georgian and his followers in pursuit, his own being too few in number to make a successful attack alone.

He had not long to wait ; for the time arranged between himself and the Georgian had scarcely elapsed ere the latter appeared on the hill in the rear, and began to cross the plain with his men at an easy gallop. That he was noticed by the Sammalous was ere long evident, from the sudden stir and movement observable among their ranks, as they held a hasty consultation whether they should abandon their booty or make a stand in

its defence. The party in pursuit being apparently not more than half their own number, they resolved on the latter course; and from the shouts and signs which they made to Hassan to come down and join them, he conjectured that the man whom he had discomfited was of some rank or consequence among them. Regardless of their signals, he disappeared over the hill to join his own party, while the Sammalous leader exclaimed to his followers, 'Curses on Abd-el-Atah, on his father, and on his mother; he sees we are about to be attacked, and he gallops off to save his own skin!'

Having rejoined his party, Hassan vaulted on Shèitan, threw off his disguise, and led them swiftly forward for about a mile, when perceiving a small gorge or cleft in the hill, which opened upon the plain, he conducted his men through it, and had the satisfaction of seeing that the body of the Sammalous were between the Georgian and himself.

'El-Hamdu-lillah, we have them!' he exclaimed, and as he spoke he loosened his sword in its sheath, looked to the priming of his pistols, and there was a joyous, exulting expression in his countenance, which gave confidence to all the party.

The time for concealment was past, for the

Georgian was now within an arrow's shot of the Sammalous. The latter had gathered their captured animals in the rear, and were preparing to resist the onset of the enemy in front, when shouts from the boys and servants in the rear caused them to turn their heads. They saw Hassan and his little band approaching in that direction. Escape was now impossible, and it only remained for them to conquer or be captured with all their booty.

The number of combatants was nearly equal; the Sammalous had, perhaps, eight or ten more than their opponents, besides a score of servants and boys on foot, who had each a sword or lance. Twenty of the fighting men of the Sammalous were quickly wheeled to the rear to oppose Hassan and his twelve horsemen, who now came on in a gallop, and in better order than might have been expected from their habitually irregular discipline.

‘Gently, gently, my men,’ said Hassan, reining in Shèitan to a moderate hand-gallop. ‘Keep your horses in breath till you are at close quarters, then let them out. A gold sequin for the first empty saddle among the Sammalous.’ His men answered with a loud and cheerful shout, and in a few minutes the conflict began.

As Hassan had expected, the Sammalous did

not await his charge in a body, but dispersed to the right and left, so as to reduce the fight rather to a succession of single combats. They fought well and bravely, nevertheless they were unable to contend with the impetuous force with which Hassan directed the attack of his small party ; in fact his appearance and his deeds equally contributed to strike a panic into them. His large and powerful figure, the joyous and exulting shouts that he raised, as man after man fell under the sweep of his sword, together with the wonderful dexterity with which he guided and wheeled his strong and fiery horse amidst and around them, contributed to throw them into amazement and consternation.

The Georgian, on his side, was not idle, and it was soon evident to the leader of the Sammalous that all hopes of saving their booty must be abandoned ; many of his men were killed—many wounded—when he reluctantly shouted aloud to the remainder words that may best be rendered by the French ‘*Sauve qui peut.*’ He himself, mounted on Nebleh, had shot about the field like a meteor ; now here, now there, darting and wheeling in every direction. Nebleh seemed to be unapproachable in her matchless speed and activity. Never had that gallant mare and her

no less gallant rider, better deserved the high reputation they had acquired than on this day so fatal to his tribe. One of the Turkish horsemen he had transfixed with his lance, and had grievously wounded two more, but now destiny had decided against him, and with a sigh he turned to fly from the luckless field.

Hassan had been so much occupied in the *melée* that he had not had time to seek out the Sammalous leader, and accident had not brought them together; but when the latter shouted to his men to fly, and turned Nebleh's head to the desert, Hassan struck his stirrups into Shèitan's flanks and darted forth in pursuit. And now commenced a race for victory on one side, for life on the other.

The Sammalous had a start of nearly fifty yards, which Shèitan's first furious bound had reduced to thirty. For nearly half a mile the speed of the horses seemed equal, but even in the heat of that exciting moment Hassan had the presence of mind to reflect that Shèitan's strength and speed had been severely tried by a long gallop on the other side of the hill, and also that his own weight was one-third greater than that of the light and sinewy form of the Sammalous chief—hence he rightly judged that in a long

race he must be the loser. Both had hitherto kept their horses somewhat within their speed, preparatory to a trial of endurance.

Hassan now resolved to call upon Shèitan for one great effort, and if that failed to give up the pursuit. Once more he slackened the rein and struck the sharp stirrup into the flanks of Shèitan. The high-bred horse, responsive to the touch, bounded forward with an impetuosity that brought him within a few yards of Nebleh's flank. At this crisis the Sammalous chief drew a pistol from his girdle, and turning round in his saddle, fired at his pursuer with so true an aim that the ball passed through Hassan's clothes and grazed his ribs, inflicting a slight flesh wound in its passage.

With a motion almost simultaneous Hassan drew out one of his pistols and aimed it full at the back of his enemy. The ball took effect between the unfortunate man's shoulders, and passed through his lungs. After reeling for a few minutes in the saddle, he fell heavily to the ground, his hand still grasping Nebleh's bridle. The intelligent and faithful animal stood by the side of her dying master, putting her nose down towards his face as if inquiring what ailed him, and why he stopped. Hassan dismounted, and leaving his panting steed at a little distance,

approached the spot.—The Sammalous was no more.

Hassan remained for a few minutes silently contemplating the body. A smile of satisfaction passed over his countenance, as he reflected how well he had avenged the wrongs of his foster-father, but it quickly passed away as he said gravely, ‘ He was a brave horseman, but his time was come—destiny had written it—Allah have mercy on his soul.’ He then commenced an examination of the dead man’s clothes, and found, as he had expected, in the shawl around his waist several small bags of money, the same which the deceased had plundered from the villages whence he had taken the horses. Securing these in his own belt, he then proceeded to lead away Nebleh, who was apparently bewildered by the death of her master, and accompanied him with the gentleness of a lamb.

Two or three of his men, who had followed the headlong chase as fast as their wearied horses could carry them, now drew near. Entrusting Nebleh to them, with many cautions not to allow her to escape, he slowly returned to the scene of the affray.

Hassan and the Georgian, after congratulating each other on the success of their expedition, began to examine into its results. Of their own

party four were killed, and ten wounded; of the Sammalous nine were killed and thirty made prisoners, of whom seventeen or eighteen were wounded. Several bags of money had been found besides those in the possession of Hassan, and forty mares and foals, carried away from the villages, besides twenty-five horses belonging to the Sammalous themselves. These items, added to a goodly collection of swords, pistols, and other accoutrements, made up a very respectable prize to lay at the feet of the Kiahia.

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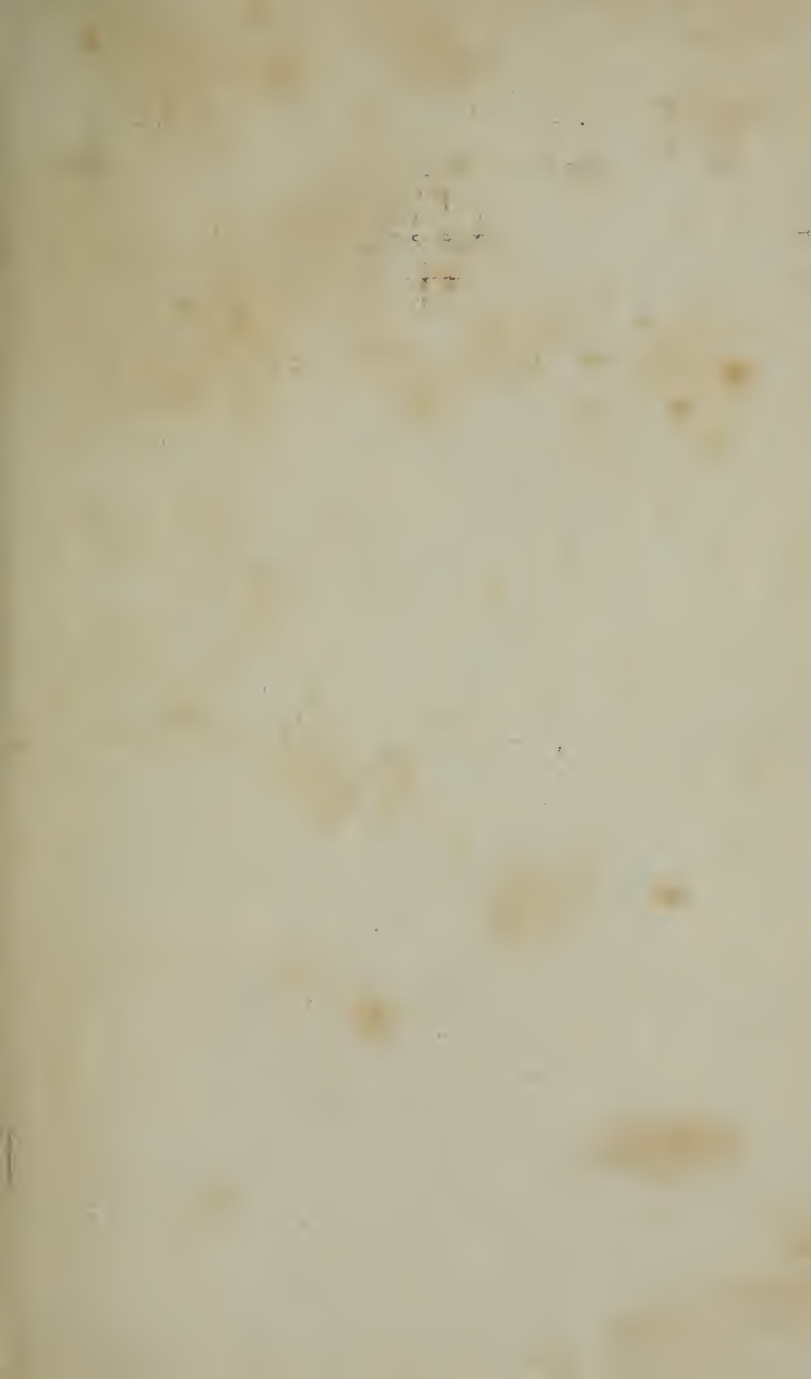
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